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# THE GRAND OPERA SINGERS OF TO-DAY



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MARY GARDEN AS *JEAN* IN " LE JONGLEUR DE NOTRE DAME "



# THE GRAND OPERA SINGERS OF TO-DAY

AN ACCOUNT OF THE  
LEADING OPERATIC STARS WHO  
HAVE SUNG DURING RECENT YEARS,  
TOGETHER WITH A SKETCH OF THE  
CHIEF OPERATIC ENTERPRISES

BY

**HENRY C. LAHEE**

Author of "Famous Singers of To-day and Yesterday," "Grand Opera in America,"  
"Famous Pianists of To-day  
and Yesterday," etc.

*New Revised Edition*



**THE PAGE COMPANY**  
**BOSTON    ✨    ✨    PUBLISHERS**

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## PREFACE

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IN writing "The Grand Opera Singers of To-day" the object has been to give some account of the leading singers who have been heard in America during the present century. Those whose careers have been touched upon in "Famous Singers of Yesterday and To-day," and in "Grand Opera in America" are not mentioned, except perhaps casually, in this book.

The plan adopted has been to follow the histories of the various opera houses, taking each singer as he appeared in opera in America.

This book is not intended to be used as a text book, or as a work of accurate history. Undoubtedly also there are some singers who should be mentioned and have not been; but the writer has endeavored to get in all the greatest, and those of the rising singers whose history is likely to be of interest to the public.

The criticisms have been selected with care,



and are always from the most authoritative critics, even though they sometimes directly contradict one another. Such contradictions only emphasize the difficulties of the singer.

HENRY C. LAHEE.

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**PART I**  
**GRAND OPERA SINGERS**  
**1903-1911**





# THE GRAND OPERA SINGERS OF TO-DAY

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## CHAPTER I

### THE METROPOLITAN OPERA-HOUSE UNDER MAURICE GRAU

IN "Famous Singers of Yesterday and To-day," and "Grand Opera in America," the records of operatic doings were brought down to the season of 1900-1901, of which Milka Ternina was the dominating personality, and during which Madame Louise Homer, now in her prime, made her American début in grand opera.

Jean de Reszké had withdrawn, and did not again return to this country, though his brother Edouard remained a member of the Metropolitan Company for some seasons.

Gloomy views of the operatic situation were taken by some of the critics, and the future of grand opera in New York (and consequently

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in other large cities) was a question which agitated the souls of music lovers. "Will Mr. Grau discover some new and phenomenal singers to take the place of those whose novelty has worn off, or will he put some new operas on the stage?" was a question propounded by one writer.

Much doubt was expressed as to the supply of great singers. This was supposed to have been exhausted, and it was doubtful also whether opera as a social function only could be successful.

Maurice Grau was, at that time, director of the Metropolitan Opera-House, and New York was still the centre of operatic activities, the Metropolitan Company visiting the other cities of importance and giving short seasons of opera. In this way Boston, Chicago, Pittsburg, Baltimore and Washington each had their short feast of opera, but Philadelphia had to take hers during the New York season, the company visiting that city on off nights. Music lovers in those cities naturally felt that their lot was hard when they had to live nearly the whole year without opera, and then be surfeited with it for one or two weeks, practically to the exclusion of all other occupations.

From this deplorable condition, which, however, was better than nothing, the country is gradually emerging, and it is the writer's task to follow out, in this book, the movements which have resulted in the establishment of operatic enterprises, — sometimes called permanent opera, — in several of the chief cities, and make some mention of many smaller companies which now visit the lesser cities throughout the country. Music lovers practically all over the land have opportunities now to hear the standard operas sung by good, if not great, singers.

Perhaps a brief review of the twenty years which ended with Maurice Grau's resignation, may prove to be the best method of leading into the period to which this book is devoted. Operatic régimes had generally ended in bankruptcy, but Maurice Grau retired with a moderate fortune.

Let us go back to the time of Henry E. Abbey, who was the great rival of Colonel Mapleson, whose operatic enterprises during the "eighties" enabled us to hear many of the greatest singers of those days. Mr. Abbey's opening year was a notable one, and has been called one of "sweetness," while the seven German

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seasons which followed were not qualified in the same way.

Mr. Abbey opened his season in 1883 with Gounod's "Faust," an opera which still retains its popularity. The cast was, Campanini, as *Faust*, Christine Nilsson, as *Margherita*, Novara, as *Mephistopheles*, Del Puente as *Valentino*, and Scalchi as *Siebel*. Two days later Madame Marcella Sembrich, who has but recently retired from grand opera, made her American début in "Lucia di Lammermoor," winning the golden opinions which she retained to the end of her career. The other chief members of the company were Madame Trebelli, Madame Fursch-Madi (dramatic soprano) Stagno, a very robust Italian tenor, and Victor Capoul, the French tenor.

One of the great "star casts" of that season was at the performance of "Don Giovanni" (Nov. 23, 1883) with Sembrich, Nilsson, Kachmann, and Mirabella, a performance which has been compared to one given under Grau in 1899 with Sembrich, Nordica, Maurel and Edouard de Reszké.

The one novelty of that season was "La Gioconda," an opera which has during the past few years become popular, but which in the in-

tervening period was not given except by Henry W. Savage's English opera company.

There seemed to be a tendency toward the dramatic as opposed to the merely ornamental operas, and in 1884-1885 Dr. Leopold Damrosch gave a season of German opera, living only long enough to see the artistic success of his enterprise. He brought Materna to this country, and after his death Anton Seidl was imported to conduct, with Walter Damrosch as his assistant. Then came a series of great German singers, Lilli Lehmann, Emil Fischer, Niemann, Marianne Brandt, Vogl and Max Alvary, who brought new knowledge of Wagner and his works to American audiences.

Financial losses caused a change of policy, and Abbey and Grau became managers, putting on French and Italian operas again, with Jean and Edouard de Reszké, Melba, Eames, Plançon, and Lasalle, as the new attractions.

The Metropolitan Opera-House was destroyed by the fire in 1892 and a season without opera ensued during the rebuilding, but in 1893-1894 Emma Calvé as *Carmen* came into view.

In 1895, the De Reszkés and Nordica gave "Tristan and Isolde," and "sang" it, estab-



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lishing a new standard for the performance of Wagner's operas.

Then came the Damrosch-Ellis venture, which lasted but a short time, and Maurice Grau remained in undisputed possession of the operatic field for several years. He adopted the policy of giving each opera in its own language, and under his management German opera stood on an equal footing with French and Italian.

A review of the New York season, printed in 1900, relates that the season had consisted of ninety-six performances, including two representations of the "Nibelungen Ring." The company afterwards made a tour to Baltimore, Washington, Pittsburg, and gave twenty-six performances in Philadelphia. The new singers in the company were Milka Ternina, Theodore Bertram (a Wagnerian artist), Friedrichs (who disappointed the public expectation in every rôle but that of *Beckmesser*), Albert Alvarez, and Pierre Cornubert, tenors, of whom neither proved successful, and Susan Strong, who was practically new.

In 1902 the chief events were the production of de Lara's opera "Messaline," and of Pad-



erewski's "Manru," the début of Madame Reuss-Belce as *Elizabeth* in "Tannhäuser," and the special performance on the occasion of the visit of Prince Henry of Germany to New York. For this performance the prices charged were from five dollars for a seat in the family circle to thirty dollars for an orchestra chair, and two hundred and fifty dollars for a box seating six people.

For some time, in fact since Jean de Reszké withdrew from the Metropolitan company, there had been much speculation as to the future of opera on account of the dearth of tenors, and few of those who sang succeeded, at first, in pleasing the public. Among those of the season of 1902 were Emil Gerhauser and Aloys Burgstaller.

Burgstaller had received all his training at the school established by Madame Wagner at Bayreuth, and had sung there, and at Hamburg and Frankfort. His chief successes were in Wagnerian rôles. He sang at the Metropolitan for several years, in fact until 1909.

Emil Gerhauser was a native of Krumbach, Bavaria. He was born in 1868 and educated by the Benedictine monks at Augsburg. At the age of twenty-two he sang at Munich, and

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was engaged there until 1892. Later he sang at Carlsbad under Felix Mottl, also at Bayreuth.

One of the most interesting singers brought to America by Grau was Gilibert, the French baritone.

Charles Gilibert was born in Paris in 1867, and received his training at the Conservatoire, after which he became a member of the Opera Comique Company. His first noteworthy success, however, was made in Brussels, at the Théâtre de la Monnaie, and later he repeated it at Covent Garden. He was brought to this country by Maurice Grau and made his début at the Metropolitan Opera-House on December 18, 1900, as the *Duke of Verona* in "Romeo et Juliette." He also sang in "La Bohême," but, during that season, he made no special success in New York. In the following year he appeared as *Sergeant Sulpice* in "La Figlia del Regimento," and took New York by storm.

For some unexplained reason he was not re-engaged by Conried, when Grau retired, and he spent that season in touring the country in concert.

When Oscar Hammerstein opened the Manhattan Opera-House he did not let such an ex-

cellent artist escape, and Gilibert was a loyal member of the Manhattan Company as long as it existed. He was to have appeared at the Metropolitan Opera-House in 1910 in one of the rôles in "The Girl," which is said to have been written especially for his voice, but his untimely death took place just before the opening of the season.

Gilibert demonstrated that secondary rôles in opera can be made rôles of great significance in the hand of a true artist. Thus he raised into their due importance the characters of *Domcairo* in "Carmen," *Monterone* in "Rigoletto," *Dr. Bartolo* in "Il Barbière," and *Mazetto* in "Don Giovanni." He excelled in the buffo parts in "L'Elisir d'Amore," and "Don Pasquale," the cook *Boniface* in "Le Jongleur," and the *Sacristan* in "Tosca," and especially in the part of the *Father* in "Louise."

On the concert platform Gilibert was noted for his rendering of the Folk songs and Eighteenth Century *Chansons* of Grétry, Monsigny, and others of that period. He was an ardent supporter of his country's music, and after his last recital in New York, in March, 1910, he is said to have remarked to a friend, that if he

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should be called away he knew he had done his duty and reached the goal for which he had striven since he came to this country, viz., to win for the French music a steady place in the hearts of Americans.

Gilibert was noted for the polish and refinement which he exhibited in his professional work and in his private life, and he was the quintessence of jovialty and good humor. He was gifted with not one of the greatest voices, but he elevated his art through study and the highest perfection of style.

Carrie Bridewell, a contralto, who was advised by Madame Sembrich to take up an operatic career, sang with the Metropolitan Company during the Grau régime, for three years. At the end of her engagement she went to Berlin to study, and while there sang at the Royal Opera-House, also in Vienna, Olmutz, Breslau and in London. She made her first appearance at the Metropolitan Opera-House in the "Magic Flute," in a cast which included Sembrich, Eames, Ternina, Fritz Scheff, Edouard de Reszké, Dippel, and Campanari. During her engagement she was heard as *Ortrud*, *Siebel*, *Amneris*, *Erda*, *Lola*, *Maddalena* in "Rigoletto," *Stephano* in "Romeo et Juli-



ette," *Urbano* in "Les Huguenots" and the *Shepherd* in "Tannhäuser."

Miss Bridewell retired about 1908, but recently resumed her professional activities.

Marcel Journet came to the Metropolitan Opera-House in 1901. According to the accounts published at the time he was born in Nice in 1868, and in Paris in 1869. He is said to have inherited his artistic temperament from his mother, and his love for music from his father. At the age of twenty he gave up his commercial career and studied music seriously, entering the Conservatoire at Paris, where he took the full course. His vocal teacher was Seghettini, a well-known Italian. In 1891 Journet made his début at Bezières. but after a month or so M. Calabresi, the manager of the Théâtre de la Monnaie at Brussels, heard him and offered him an engagement. He remained at Brussels for six years, and sang also at Covent Garden for four seasons, and then in most of the musical centres of Europe.

During his seasons in America he was a steady favorite, but in 1908 he left for Europe on the plea of ill health. On being asked if he would return he replied that "as he desired

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to sing first bass rôles as he did in other places, it is necessary for him to wait until he is sixty-one years old and has a voice like a Cossack with a cold, before the people would call him a genius and pay him \$1600 a night, — unless the ideas of managers change.” Other basses had come to America, — one other bass in particular.

One of the noteworthy singers imported in 1902 was Madame Kirkby-Lunn, an English contralto. She made her début at the Metropolitan Opera-House in “Lohengrin,” when a critic wrote, “She gave splendid utterance to the rôle. Her singing was marked by breadth of method, admirable notions of phrasing and impeccable intonation. Her lower register is uncommonly rich, almost masculine in quality, while the upper portion of her voice is decidedly bright in color.”

Madame Kirkby-Lunn was afterward heard as *Kundry* in Henry W. Savage’s production of “Parsifal,” and again later at the Metropolitan Opera-House.

Georg Anthes was one of Grau’s leading tenors for some years. He was one of the chief ornaments of the Dresden Opera-House. Mr. Grau had been in communication with him



for some weeks when Anthes sprained his knee and petitioned the intendant of the Dresden Opera-House to dissolve his contract, which had still some years to run. The request was refused and Anthes decided to accept Grau's offer, and break his Dresden contract. Under such conditions Anthes was unable to appear in any German opera-house for a number of years. He was at the Metropolitan Opera-House for several seasons.

Maurice Grau retired from the management of the Metropolitan Opera-House in 1903. He is remarkable as the first grand opera impresario to make grand opera profitable.

Grau was born at Brunn, in Austria, in 1846, and came to this country five years later. He began his career as libretto boy in a theatre. His education was completed at Columbia college. At an early age he began to assist his father, Jacob Grau, a theatrical manager, and before he reached his majority was earning a large salary as advance agent.

His managerial career commenced when he and Chizzola got together a capital of \$2500, and brought Marie Aimée and a French company to America.

It was Maurice Grau who took charge of the

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memorable tour of Anton Rubinstein, the great pianist, and later of Salvini, the Italian tragedian. Then, with Hess, he brought out, 1874, Clara Louise Kellogg, and in 1876, Offenbach. The Offenbach enterprise was not successful, but, by a happy thought, he combined Offenbach and Aimée, and saved himself from financial loss. It is not necessary to record his many enterprises, but eventually he joined with Henry Abbey in the management of grand opera, continuing alone after Abbey's death. He retired in 1903, broken down by overwork, and died at Croissy, France, on March 14, 1907, leaving a fortune of about half a million dollars.

Maurice Grau's service to music *per se* was not notable. He gave no incentive to composers. He avoided experiments. He had little sentimental interest in grand opera, and very little enthusiasm. He simply tried to give the public what it wanted, — so far as he was able to find the public want. "I have never discovered a voice in my life," he is said to have remarked, "I have merely shown them the difference between singing at home for \$2000 a year, and here for \$25,000. I don't go around discovering operas. I am not musician

enough for that. Opera is nothing but cold business to me."

Although not responsible for much that was new, his efforts brought to thousands a better knowledge of the works of the masters of music. There was nothing of the *poseur* about him. He did not seek notoriety. Operatic management was his only taste. The following quotation from a letter written to him by Edouard de Reszké at the time of his retirement will show the opinion of the leading artists: "You have made of the Metropolitan Opera-House an International Theatre, and the leading one of the world. At the same time you have given representations of the best works of the ancient and modern repertoire and, so to speak, compelled the public to imbibe taste for all that was good in opera."

The secret of Mr. Grau's financial success is said to have been his faith in "all star" combinations, and he drew tremendous houses at increased prices. He did not stimulate the musical appetite of the people by giving them new operas, but he appealed to them very much in the same way as the late P. T. Barnum, i. e., by giving them "the biggest show on earth," — that is to say, nowhere could there be found

a combination of so many great singers as he would present in one of his operatic performances.

This policy, of course, tended to increase the cost of opera. It is related that the subscription for the season in Mr. Grau's day was about \$150,000, while at the present day it is \$700,000.

An amusing story is told about Maurice Grau, by his brother Robert. Grau had just closed his season in Chicago and was returning to New York in company with his galaxy of star singers, — Eames, Calvé, Nordica, Plançon, the de Reszkés, etc. They were gazing on the beauties of the scenery as the train drew near to the Catskill district. The season had not been lucrative, — in fact there had been a large deficit. Mr. Grau approached his singers and remarked: "Gaze on, my children, and gaze long at this wondrous spectacle, for it is the last time any of you will ever view it at my expense."

In a review of the operatic season of 1902-1903, which was the last season of Mr. Grau, Mr. Joseph Sohn declared that we were in a stage of transition, and that, as regards the interpretation of operatic rôles, the scope of the



performer had been enlarged at the expense of the standard of quality. "Localization and concentration of effort no longer exist, the performer being expected to master every style and mode evolved during a century far more prolific of musical achievement and development than any of its predecessors."

This refers probably to the fact that most of the great singers were expected to sing opera in several languages, a condition which has been considerably modified during recent years, when there have been practically separate casts for French, German and Italian operas. There were occasions when such an opera as Gounod's "Faust," for instance, was given, and the principals sang their parts in different languages, each choosing the language which suited him best, — an arrangement which was doubtless satisfactory to the singers, but hardly gratifying to the audience.

Mr. Sohn goes on to emphasize the fact that it was "the dramatic element — that primary requisite which gives verity and vitality to all artistic representation — that does not receive sufficient justice at the hands of our artistic exponents, conductors and singers alike."

Mr. Sohn also advocated the employment of



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opera singers born and trained in this country, and referred to the early experiences of Madame Malibran and Adelina Patti, who made their first successes in New York. He also asked why it was necessary for American singers to be obliged to go abroad and make a début in Europe, where they are frequently greeted "with frantic applause," while there is opportunity for them in their native land.

The solution of these questions has been partly worked out during the succeeding years and, more than that, several American singers, some of them with little or no European training, have in the past few years made their débuts in their native land and have won their reputation.

Some account of these events will be found in the succeeding pages, but mention is here made of the situation at the time of Mr. Grau's retirement. It is only fair to say in defence of Mr. Grau, that it was his business to give the American public what he believed it wanted, and most certainly, the American public, or, at least, that part of it that frequented the Metropolitan Opera-House, was, in those days, intolerant of singers without reputation.

## CHAPTER II

### THE METROPOLITAN OPERA - HOUSE UNDER HEIN - RICH CONRIED

WHEN Maurice Grau resigned his position of managing director of the Metropolitan Opera-House there was much speculation as to who would be his successor. The history of opera in New York was a story of financial failure. As one commentator put it, — opera had flourished on failure, but as soon as one man was completely ruined there was always another eager to take his place. Thus, there were many candidates to fill the place of Maurice Grau, and possibly the fortune which he amassed by grand opera may have given impetus to the competition.

After proper deliberation the board of directors met and on February 13, 1903, elected Heinrich Conried, who was at that time manager of the Irving Place Theatre.

Conried was a native of Bielitz, in Austrian Silesia, born in 1855, and he became an actor.

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In 1877 he found his way to New York and took up the business of theatrical management. At one time he was associated with Oscar Hammerstein, who later, as will be seen hereafter, became his great rival in the presentation of grand opera.

In view of the fact that Mr. Conried's experience had been with the theatre, rather than with the opera-house, there was much speculation as to what he would do and how well he would do it. (Mr. Conried promised great productions and sweeping reforms in many details of operatic management.) His views on the "star system" were decided, and he declared that it would be his aim to secure excellence of *ensemble* rather than brilliancy of individual performance. This was a bold declaration after the great "all star" casts which had been provided by Grau, for an audience which was notoriously difficult to attract by anything but the names of great singers. Of his productions "Parsifal" was the greatest undertaking, but will be described at length later.

That Mr. Conried's election gave satisfaction to the public may be judged by the press comments of the period. Perhaps the most con-

cise of these was that published in the "Outlook" of February 28, 1903, which gives expression to the feelings of the public at that time. From it we quote as follows:

"Lovers of music are deeply gratified by the selection of Mr. Heinrich Conried, manager of the Irving Place Theatre in this city, to succeed Mr. Maurice Grau as manager of the opera for the next five years. Mr. Conried possesses the double qualifications necessary for a thoroughly successful high-class management of the opera: he is a business man of large experience, who has demonstrated his practical sagacity by his success, and he is also a man of artistic education and taste, who has treated the drama as literature and not simply as a means of making money. The performances given under his direction at the Irving Place Theatre have been conspicuous, not only because actors of first-class ability have appeared in them, but because all the details have been supervised with the utmost care, and everything possible has been done to give the plays artistic harmony and completeness. This is precisely what the opera at the Metropolitan Opera-House has lacked. New York has had at times the most brilliant singing to be found in any city in the

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world. It has had, not only stars of the first magnitude, but constellations — groups of artists of the highest rank; but the details of the opera have been sadly overlooked and undervalued, and the performance has therefore lacked, so far as the management is concerned, thorough artistic treatment and artistic feeling. It is precisely these qualities that Mr. Conried will undoubtedly introduce into his management. He has had very large experience in studying the resources of the drama abroad and in negotiating with foreign artists, and this experience will serve him in good stead when he transfers his work from the dramatic to the operatic stage. The public may confidently look, not only for the appearance of great singers in the Metropolitan Opera-House, but for careful and artistic stage management; for the treatment of the opera as one of the great arts, and not simply as an instrument of pleasure or a means of making money. Mr. Grau, who is a man of great energy and persistence, has laid a strong financial foundation on which Mr. Conried will be able to build up an artistic success."

The company of singers for the season of 1903-1904 included many of the old favorites.



The sopranos were Marcella Sembrich, Emma Calvé, Milka Ternina, Madame Gadski, Aino Ackté, Camille Seygard, Fanchon Thompson, and Lillian Heidelbach. The altos — Louise Homer, Edythe Walker, Josephine Jacoby, and Marcia van Dresser. The tenors — Enrico Caruso, Ernst Krauss, F. Naval, Andreas Dippel, Aloys Burgstaller, Jacques Bars, and Guardabassi. The basses — Pol Plançon, Robert Blass, and Rossi.

As a rule, the new singers did not please the public, who not only preferred the favorites of established reputation, but had been made to believe that the supply of great singers in Europe was exhausted, — a theory which would seem at least to lift a burden from the shoulders of the manager, and which was exploded when, a few years later, Oscar Hammerstein entered the operatic field, and found admirable singers in spite of the sad European conditions.

Of the sopranos Marcella Sembrich was then at the height of her popularity, and she continued to be a prominent figure in opera for several years. At the end of her operatic career she was still able to draw large houses as a concert singer, for her art was undeniable even when her voice was no longer at its best.



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Emma Calvé soon retired and married, but in 1912 she returned to America and appeared in "Carmen." Being middle-aged and portly, she was no longer the fascinating *Carmen* of the '90's, though her art had not deserted her.

Milka Ternina retired from the operatic stage with her powers undiminished, while Madame Gadski still sings occasionally.

Of the contraltos all were known before the time of Mr. Conried's management, Madame Homer has pursued a continuously successful career, and at the present time is one of the most popular contraltos before the public.

Edythe Walker, a native of New York, had been considered one of the most successful American contraltos in Europe, and was singing at the Imperial Opera-House in Vienna before being engaged for the Metropolitan Opera-House. She had been a pupil of Orgeni in Dresden, and had filled engagements in Prague and other Austrian cities before going to Vienna. Her chief rôles, besides the Meyerbeer repertoire, were Wagnerian, and she had met with success in Berlin as *Isolde* and *Brünnhilde* at the Royal Opera.

In 1903 she came to the Metropolitan Opera-House and on her début in "Aida" she was

reported as "the possessor of a voice of lovely quality, though not of great volume. There is a decided charm in her singing, the most marked grace of which is the perfect evenness of its quality up to the point where the pitch puts a strain on her. Her voice is also a capital vehicle for feeling. Her performance of the scene with the priest in the last act was probably the finest that patrons of the Metropolitan Opera-House can recall, and was only equalled in the evening's representation by Gadski's superb singing of the Nile scene."

During later years Miss Walker has pursued a most successful career in Europe, where she is known as a Wagnerian singer. In London she created the part of *Elektra* in Strauss's opera of that name on its production in that city.

Of the sopranos who were new, the most important of foreign birth was Aino Ackté, a Finn, from Helsingfors, who had begun her vocal studies with her mother. She had also studied art, but eventually found her voice more promising. When she applied for admission to the Conservatoire at Paris she was the first selected from a hundred and ninety-seven applicants. In 1894 she took first grand prize

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and was at once given a début at the Grand Opera as *Marguerite* in "Faust." After several years in Paris she made, in 1902, a tour of Germany. Madame Ackté is a lyric soprano and is known in private life as Madame Renvall, being the wife of a professor of law at Helsingfors.

Marion Weed, who also appeared at the Metropolitan Opera-House, was a New York girl who had been a pupil of Lilli Lehmann, and had her first opportunity at Bayreuth, after which she was employed at the Stadt Theatre in Hamburg until she was called to the Metropolitan Opera-House.

Marcia van Dresser, who joined the Metropolitan forces in 1903, began her career in light opera, as a member of the Bostonians. Leaving this company she took up dramatic work and appeared with Augustin Daly, Viola Allen and Otis Skinner. At the time when her dramatic career seemed to be most promising she abandoned it and went abroad to study for opera, eventually securing an engagement in Dessau.

Robert Blass is an American, who began his operatic career in Germany. His name was, or is, Lloyd D'Aubigny, and he was more famil-

ially known as Tom Dabney. He was intended for the practice of medicine, and prepared at Columbia University. But finding that he was more interested in the stage, he sought a theatrical engagement and was employed by Augustin Daly to sing in his Shakespearian revivals. From that he worked into opera and has been for several years a valuable member of the Metropolitan Company.

Ernst Krauss was not a new comer, for he had sung for two seasons when Damrosch was at the Metropolitan Opera-House. He was now engaged by Conried while singing at the Imperial Opera in Berlin, where he was much appreciated. He was given leave of absence to enable him to come to America.

Naval was a young Roumanian, who had studied for the stage in Germany, and began his operatic career at the Stadt Opera-House in Frankfort. He was called thence to Vienna, where he appeared in the first production of "La Bohême" at the Théâtre am der Wien. Being successful here he was engaged at the Imperial Opera-House, where he remained until, in 1902, he had a disagreement with Gustav Mahler, at that time conductor. Naval was described as being handsome, blonde, unmarried,



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and, in short, the ideal "matinée girl's" tenor.

Guardabassi was a young Italian who had been some time in America, and having appeared with good success in concerts was taken on by Mr. Conried.

Rossi had sung with Madame Sembrich in Vienna in 1898, and during his American career had great success in supporting her in buffo rôles in "Don Pasquali" and such works. Previous to his arrival in America he had been for several seasons at La Scala, Milan. He became a very popular singer in this country. Rossi was born in Rome in 1869. When he was a young man his voice promised to be a tenor, but he fell into the river and had an attack of pleurisy after which his voice settled into bass. He made his début at Parma in 1891, and toured South America with Patti.

Of all the singers engaged by Conried at the Metropolitan Opera-House no one ever became so great a celebrity as Enrico Caruso. As an actor and as a singer his art was inferior to that of several of his rivals, but his voice was one of the most wonderful organs ever bestowed upon man. His popularity became so great that in April, 1906, a writer in the





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ENRICO CARUSO



“ Forum ” described the situation as being comparable with the old game of “ What are you going to give the old bachelor to keep house with? ” in which the answer had to be invariably the same. Thus, — “ What were the principal operas performed at the Metropolitan? Caruso. Who sang the chief rôles? Caruso. Why was German opera given so late? Caruso.” One might add to that another question, “ What is Italian Opera? Caruso.”

No singer in the history of opera in America has been such a bonanza to newspaper writers, for every doing of Caruso has been reported and enlarged upon. We have waded through several bushels of newspaper clippings bearing upon Caruso and his career and there are very few of them that seem worth repeating. One clipping is amusing and comes from Berlin, where, after the great singer had expressed surprise at the fame which his voice had given him, he is said to have stated that he had recently been told that one of his ancestors was the Emperor Carus, who during the year 282, swept Persia like a devastating plague until finally he met with a frightful death by lightning. As Caruso, himself, had narrowly escaped death in the San Francisco earthquake

a short time before, he declared that he should doubtless be convinced of his resemblance to his illustrious progenitor as soon as he could examine the picture of the emperor on the antique coins of the time, and compare it with his own features. It may be remarked in passing that Caruso's sense of humor is one of his chief characteristics, and he is very clever at drawing sketches of the people with whom he is associated.

Enrico Caruso was born at Naples in 1873. He was the son of a mechanic who actually disliked music, so that when the boy's musical talent began to manifest itself the father would give no aid towards its development. Notwithstanding this Enrico began to sing in the churches of his native city when he was about eleven years of age. There was more or less friction on account of music, between the father and son, until the death of the mother which occurred when the boy was about fifteen years of age. It had been owing to the mother's encouragement that he had progressed in music as far as church singing. She had always admired his musical talent and had called him the treasure of the family.

Young Caruso now got employment in a

chemical factory which was owned by a Belgian, and he worked there until the owner returned to his native land. By this time Enrico was eighteen. He happened to meet one Edouard Missiano, a baritone singer, who took much interest in his voice, and who reproached him for singing without having taken lessons, to which Caruso replied that he had no funds.

Missiano told him not to worry on that account, he would take him to his own teacher who would give him lessons for nothing if he (Missiano) asked him, for he was one of the paying pupils.

Accordingly Missiano took Caruso to his teacher, Guglielmo Vergine, who gave his voice a trial, but was at first unable to express any very encouraging opinion. Missiano, however, declared that the young man had been singing all day and was nervous and tired. He succeeded in making another appointment, the result of which was that the teacher undertook to give Caruso lessons for three years, and that when ready for a professional career he should pay Vergine twenty-five per cent of his earnings during the following five years.

Caruso began his lessons, but there was more or less friction between him and his teacher



because of the contract which he had made. He was obliged to take engagements in order to provide himself with the means of subsistence, while his teacher wished him to do no professional work until he was properly prepared.

This state of affairs was temporarily ended by Caruso's being called upon to serve in the army, a service which is customary for every able man in many of the European countries. Caruso's own story of his life in the army was published some years ago, and the following anecdote, quoted from this story, will be found amusing:

“ In Italy every man has to serve his time in the army, but, happily for me, my military duties were short lived, for I drew the attention of the commander of the regiment. He had heard me sing in the barracks where I practised in my leisure.

“ The major questioned me closely one day and, having great regard for my voice, made my duties for the period of active service very light. He also advised me as to how I might be entirely exempted from active service if I had friends of influence to take up my cause.

“ So I started to unroll the red tape that should free me, singing all the while in the bar-

racks, to the great delight of the soldiers and officers. My position became such that in a short time, when a popular soldier was imprisoned for some slight offence, I could obtain his freedom by volunteering to sing any song the officer on duty would care to hear.

“ I well remember one lovely Easter day when the officers gave a lunch to the soldiers of the regiment. At one end of the table sat the commander, Major Nagliate, at the other end, facing him, sat Caruso.

“ After the luncheon it was proposed and universally seconded, that I should sing the Wine Song of ‘ Cavalleria Rusticana ’ in honor of the major. My song was greeted with most enthusiastic applause and cries of ‘ encore.’

“ The major silenced every one by raising his hand, and then rose to make a speech. What was our surprise and chagrin when he delivered a very sharp lecture directed against the regiment in general and myself in particular, saying that it was unpardonable to compel me to sing at each beck and whim, and criminal to request it after a meal, and that I was a fool and didn’t deserve the gift I held so lightly, and that if, in the future, there was a repetition he would not only put in irons the person, re-

gardless of rank, who compelled me to sing, but he would punish me too."

During the time that Caruso was in the army his father married a second wife, and she was able to understand that a great career was possible for her step-son, so she tried to induce the father to free him from military service. Caruso's brother, however, volunteered to serve in his place, and was accepted. Thus after a year and a half of military service lessons were resumed with Vergine, and six months later, in 1894, the new tenor made his début at the Nuovo Theatre, Naples, in a new opera entitled "L'Amico Francesco."

Then followed the usual round of scattered engagements. He was at Caserto for a time, then at Cairo, and, returning to Italy, he went to the Fondo Theatre at Naples. Then he toured Italy and Sicily and finally reached Milan, where the important part of his career really began, for he had now gained stage experience.

He appeared at La Scala, and remained there four seasons. He also sang at St. Petersburg, Moscow and Warsaw two seasons, three at Rome, three in London, and he appeared at most of the important cities of Germany before

he made his first appearance in America, which took place at the Metropolitan Opera-House, New York, on November 23, 1903.

It is recorded that Maurice Grau at one time entered into negotiations with Caruso and could have engaged him at a salary of \$700 per month, with the privilege of extending the engagement for two years at a slight advance in case the first season proved successful. But Caruso was then scarcely known, and the experiment of bringing to America singers without any reputation was so great a risk, — much greater then than now, — that the opportunity was allowed to pass.

In 1902 Mr. Grau went abroad again to engage singers and once more made overtures to Caruso, but this time the singer had his plans already completed. Mr. Grau nevertheless succeeded in making a contract with him for the following season, by which he was to make forty appearances at a salary of \$1000 a night, and the right was conceded to extend the contract for two more seasons at \$1200 and \$1400 per night respectively, dependent upon the success of the first season. Mr. Conried followed Grau at the Opera-House and Caruso made his début in New York during that season, as al-



ready stated. But there are somewhat conflicting stories as to the particulars of this first contract. Conried is said to have declared the Grau contract void, and to have succeeded in engaging Caruso on more satisfactory terms.

The following story concerning the capture of Caruso by Conried, has been pronounced absurd by one of the leading critics of New York, and we can take it for granted that he is right. Nevertheless, it is sufficiently amusing, even if merely fiction, to be repeated:

“Conried wanted a good Italian tenor, and, not knowing much about Italian tenors, he walked along Broadway until he came to a boot-black stand kept by an Italian. He asked the proprietor of the stand who was the greatest Italian tenor. ‘Caruso,’ was the reply. Conried returned to his office and asked his assistants whether there was anything on record about an Italian tenor named Caruso. In due time the contract made by Grau was discovered. Conried then went to the Italian Savings Bank and asked one of the officials who was the greatest Italian tenor of the day. ‘Caruso,’ was the reply again, to which was added the information that the secretary of the bank was personally acquainted with him. A con-



versation was then held with the secretary, who was authorized to enter into negotiations, and finally to cable an offer to Caruso."

When Caruso first appeared at the Metropolitan Opera-House on November 23, 1903, the critics did not at once go into ecstasies over him. The *Tribune* wrote as follows, concerning his performance: "Signor Caruso has many of the tiresome Italian vocal affectations, and when he neglects to cover his tones, as he always does when he becomes strenuous, his voice becomes pallid. But he is generally a manly singer, with a voice that is true, of fine quality, and marvellous endurance. He had a gratifying reception at the end of the first act, though the chief honors went to Madame Sembrich, and Scotti."

During the remainder of the week Caruso was a victim to the climate, but when he appeared in "Aida" the *Tribune* began to comment favorably, thus: "The pleasure which his singing gives is exquisite, scarcely leaving room for curious questionings touching his limitations. He is to be accepted for what he is with gratitude, and no one who loves the art of song ought to miss the opportunities which his presence at the Metropolitan offers."

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The public flocked to hear Caruso, and, in a short time, it became evident that opera, to a New Yorker, meant Caruso. His singing appealed to the average opera goer because of his glorious voice, which he never spared. We have had several tenors who were artistically better singers than Caruso, but never one who could take the audience "off its feet" as he could. His most successful parts were in Italian operas,—as *Rhadames* in "Aida," *Manrico* in "Il Trovatore," *Turiddu* in "Cavalleria Rusticana," *Johnson* in "The Girl of the Golden West," and so on. He sang many parts.

In the course of time, after a too strenuous opera season, Caruso had some trouble with his throat, which he overcame with a little rest and care, but from that time the world has frequently been needlessly alarmed with rumors that Caruso will never sing again. He has found it necessary to moderate his exuberance and use discretion in his singing, and perhaps his voice is not what it once was, but he remains the greatest attraction amongst operatic tenors of the present day.

Caruso is noted for his happy disposition, and somewhat reckless ways. It was stated

that his career was nearly cut short after his early success in Naples, through his indulgence in the luxuries of life with boon companions. Even when the newspapers reported that, "Caruso was not up to his standard last night," he took no notice, but his love of pleasure and the self-confidence of youth caused him to reject every suggestion of reform. One day, however, a warning came to him while he was in a thoughtful mood, and brought a realization of his danger. He abandoned his gay companions, and shortly afterwards married a singer named Ada Ciacchetti, with whom he had been associated in opera at Treviso and Bologna.

There are many stories told about Caruso. Those which amuse us are such as illustrate the bright side of his character. He is like an overgrown boy, always in good humor and full of pranks.

One anecdote tells how, while Emma Eames was waiting her entry in the wings, Caruso, coming up behind, slapped her lightly on the shoulder and dodged behind a piece of scenery near by. Quick as a flash the prima donna looked round, and seeing some "supers" near by, nearly froze them with her glance.

In the first act of "Tosca" the stage is arranged with Cavaradossi's easel, and his brushes. One of the brushes is carelessly left on the floor, to be picked up during the act by the *Sacristan*. Each time that any one passed that brush he would be sure to pick it up and place it on the easel. As often as this happened one of the property men would replace the brush on the stage. Presently Caruso got a hammer and nail and fastened the brush definitely to the stage. All then went well until the curtain had risen and the sacristan with his feather duster began his duties. Coming to the easel he, as usual, stooped down to pick up the brush and replace it, but it would not budge, and had to remain where it was nailed, in spite of the sacristan's efforts.

The previous anecdote and several others were told by one who had been a "super" in the opera company, and who tells that Caruso is always imitating the ballet or mimicking some soprano as she takes her E in alt. He tells how, one evening, when Caruso had been pouring forth his adoration to *Aida* with the utmost feeling, he came off the stage and, picking up the first ballet girl he met, waltzed her about exuberantly. Sometimes, after singing



one of his great arias, he would come off, grab the hat and cloak of some chorus man, and re-entering, sing as lustily as any of them. Almost everything that Caruso does or has done, has been fully described in print, even to his "oiling up" with the atomizer before going on the stage.

There is another anecdote of Caruso. It relates to his early friend Missiano, who set him on the road to fame by taking him to Vergine, the singing master. Edouard Missiano, when Caruso first knew him, was well-to-do. He was the son of wealthy parents, but, in the course of events, financial reverses came, and, eventually, when Caruso returned to Italy, a few years ago, he discovered Missiano broken in spirits and health, and a poor man. Caruso told Mr. Gatti-Casazza about his friend and succeeded in securing an engagement for him at the Metropolitan Opera-House, where he sang minor parts in many of the operas. In the "Girl of the Golden West" Missiano was *Joe Castro*, and he was assigned a small part in "La Gioconda," which was in rehearsal when Missiano was taken ill and died suddenly. Missiano left a wife and three children in Naples, and Caruso is said to have sent the body of his friend to



Naples for burial, and cabled to the widow the amount of his own earnings for the performance of " *La Gioconda* " in which Missiano was to have appeared.

During recent years the troubles which Caruso has had, from time to time, with his throat, have taught him greater discretion in his singing, and he has gained in artistic skill, though perhaps he has lost something in the matter of fervor, for of all singers, at least within the memory of the average opera goer of to-day, no one has given his voice more unsparingly than Caruso.

There have been tenor " crazes " from time to time, — in America we have admired Brignoli, Campanini, Ravelli (a short-lived admiration), Tamagno, and Jean de Reszké, but, as far as memory serves, there has been nothing quite equal to the Caruso craze.

Olive Fremstadt was born in Norway, and was brought to this country while still quite a young girl. It is said that her musical talent was such that she appeared as a concert pianist in her native land at the age of five.

On arrival in America she went to Minneapolis, where she grew up and lived, teaching music in that city and in Duluth. After some years

of hard and bitter struggle she went to Chicago, where the struggle was equally hard, but the field for endeavor was broader. She played accompaniments, besides teaching the piano. Presently she went on to New York and renewed the fight for her place in the musical profession. Here, again, she gave lessons, and she played accompaniments for vocal teachers in their studios. She held a church position, and, while she spent her days in work, she spent her evenings in study. She also made several concert tours, but none of these things satisfied her ambitions, which were far above both the church and concert platform.

Eventually she went abroad, though not until after she had appeared in concert in New York under Anton Seidl, on which occasion she disclosed a beautiful mezzo-soprano voice. She decided to go to Germany, and was fortunate enough to be one of a group of young American singers to be accepted by Lilli Lehmann. Under her guidance the young singer worked harder than ever and made a concert début at the Philharmonie in Berlin. Later on, through Lilli Lehmann, she obtained a hearing at Bayreuth, and was so successful that she was engaged for the opera at Cologne.

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Her operatic début was made in Vienna, where she sang the rôle of *Brangaene* to Lehmann's *Isolde*.

Miss Fremstadt was a favorite of Madame Wagner, under whom she studied Wagnerian rôles, and her greatest successes have been in those parts. She appeared in "Rheingold," in "Götterdämmerung," and as one of the flower girls in "Parsifal." During her life in Berlin she sang often at von Moltke's drawing-room, and at the houses of various exclusive music-lovers, and her own concert in Berlin was one of the greatest successes of her life.

After her appearances in Bayreuth and her engagement for the opera at Cologne, she remained in the latter city for some years, singing many rôles in the lighter operas, and taking also the parts of *Waltraute* and *Carmen*, in which latter she is said to have created a furore which, in Germany, rivalled Calvé's. She now received offers from various opera-houses, but was finally captured by von Possart, for the Royal Opera-House at Munich. Here she played *Brangaene*, *Fides*, *Carmen*, *Haensel* and other contralto rôles. After her farewell performance of "Carmen" it is related that the students unharnessed the horses from her

carriage and, hanging it with laurel wreaths, drew her through the streets. This is the time-honored manner in which students in Europe show their admiration for opera singers.

She now sang in London, and was then engaged for America, where she has continually added to her artistic triumphs. Miss Fremstadt was married in Salt Lake City, during a trip of the Metropolitan Opera Company in 1906, and is known in private life as Mrs. Sutphen.

It seems to be customary for reporters to ask successful singers if they have any special advice to give to young singers. To this question Miss Fremstadt replied, "No one's advice means very much along a road where every inch must be worked out differently by different people, some of whom realize the importance of details, while others never can be made to realize these things; and if I were to offer advice, it would be summed up in these words, 'Learn how to study,' and this advice comes from experience of the fullest and most bitter sort." Most sound and succinct advice.

Successful singers are also frequently asked about the comparative advantages of study in America, and study abroad. This question



Miss Fremstadt answers from a wealth of experience: "I think that the student is at a disadvantage in America. Not so much, perhaps, on account of lack of instructors, as because the incentive to study properly does not exist here. I do consider that atmosphere and the surroundings are the most necessary adjuncts in the making of an artist, and without them I do not believe that an artist can rise to a great height any more than I believe that I could have become a great artist by remaining in Minnesota, not doubting that my love for it was as great when I was starving for it as after I was surfeited; but the systematic application of what I heard as well as the assimilation and absorption permitted, or rather brought about, a development which could not be accounted for or obtained in any other way."

She also said: "Success does not depend any more upon instruction and natural equipments than it does upon one's power of endurance. To achieve the goal one must be able to cast aside every tie, home and family, to overcome every obstacle, and to face any and every hardship and remember nothing else but study. Many have talent, but few have the fortitude to study and overcome."



It would be possible to fill many pages with criticisms extolling Miss Fremstadt as an artist, for she is considered one of the greatest singers before the public at the present day. Let one suffice, and this one followed her appearance as Brünnhilde at the Metropolitan Opera-House.

“ Last Thursday’s ‘ Walküre ’ showed Madame Fremstad as a Brünnhilde whom no other dramatic soprano of to-day is able to surpass in fulness and richness of voice, dignity of singing style, plasticity of gesture and action, passionate sincerity and intellectual grasp of the personal as well as the psychological significance of the complex Brünnhilde character. The ‘ Ho jo to ho ’ rang exultingly through the rocky heights, the ‘ Todesverkündigung ’ was a deeply moving piece of vocal declamation in which every word of the text was charged with majesty and pathos, and nothing so thoroughly affecting has been heard on our opera stage for a long time as the Fremstad version of the scene in which she subordinates herself to the punishment inflicted upon her by the helpless Wotan — himself more to blame than Brünnhilde for that person’s lovable transgression.

“ Whether singing to reflect poignant tones of woe or the youthful and passionate independence of untamed womanhood, Madame Fremstad employed her voice always with fine and knowing art and showed that volume may be achieved without forcing, and intensity suggested without forgetting the grateful tenets of bel canto. It was a glorious Brünnhilde performance vouchsafed our public by Madame Fremstad, and the thunders of applause that compelled her to take dozens of curtain calls must be regarded as only a just tribute to her impressive singing and acting art.”

When Miss Fremstadt made her début at the Metropolitan Opera-House in 1903 the following report was made: “ Miss Fremstadt has everything appertaining to voice and appearance in her favor, and though a tendency towards the Teutonic stride and pose, which Bayreuth has encouraged, militate against the sweet naturalness of which the character of *Sieglinde* is an index, she took rank with most of her predecessors in the part, and New York has heard the best representatives imaginable in it.”

At the end of the season of 1903-1904 the usual reviews were printed and the manner in



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OLIVE FREMSTADT AS *ISOLDE*



which Mr. Conried had performed the duties which he had promised was held up to public view. One of the best of these reviews was published in *The Nation* on March 17, 1904, and from this we quote, with permission, because it touches upon certain questions, and conditions, which existed at that time, and which, to some extent, exist at the present day.

“ In some respects the New York opera season of 1903-1904 will be remembered as the most interesting on record, and it is to be regretted that it should have been marred by shortcomings which were the more exasperating because they were unexpected. When Mr. Conried succeeded Mr. Grau, he recognized the fact that the one thing most needed at the Metropolitan Opera-House was provision for more thorough rehearsing of the operas produced; he promised a speedy reform in this respect, but it is difficult to recall a season in which so many of the operas were apparently pitchforked upon the stage with no preparation at all. And shortcomings were particularly noticeable in the scenic department, which we had been told was to be specially improved.

“ It is only fair to bear in mind that it was largely owing to circumstances beyond his con-



trol that Mr. Conried was prevented from making good some of his promises. He certainly did provide for most of the Wagner operas and some of the others new scenic outfits, which were a great improvement on what we have had before. "Parsifal" alone was done in a manner equalling and, in some respects, surpassing the Bayreuth standard, and the management reaped its financial reward in receipts exceeding \$200,000 for that opera alone. There is reason to believe that no previous operatic year at the Metropolitan has yielded so large a profit. For this happy result "Parsifal" was responsible in the first place, and, in the second place — Donizetti! The joint appearance of two such sterling artists as Mme. Sembrich and Signor Caruso led to a renaissance of old-fashioned Italian opera which caused the Donizetti works to draw crowded audiences at every performance.

"In this fact lies the chief lesson of the season for the manager. The recent Donizetti casts have never been excelled, perhaps never equalled, here, while the Wagner casts have usually been far inferior to those we have had in previous seasons. New Yorkers pay the highest prices in the world for opera tickets,

and in return they demand, quite justly, that they should have the greatest singers in the world. Mr. Conried's chief mistake has been the failure to engage, at whatever price, certain singers who are great favorites here — Jean and Edouard de Reszké, Lillian Nordica, and Emma Eames. Mr. Grau used to say that his highest-priced singer, Jean de Reszké, was also the cheapest. He always filled the house.

“ While Mr. Conried had been at one time an operatic manager abroad, he was, when appointed to his present place, unfamiliar with the taste and demands of the New York public. He had a vague idea that Europe was full of young and talented singers who would be promptly accepted here in place of the great stars he refused to engage. He is absurdly mistaken in this matter; there are painfully few good singers in Europe, and some that are admired there make little impression here, as Mr. Conried has had occasion to notice in the case of several of his importations.

“ Mr. Conried harbors antiquated ideas regarding “ stars ” and “ ensemble.” He apparently needs to be told that an ensemble of mediocrities is not desired or tolerated by opera-goers who pay \$5 for a seat. What they

want is *an ensemble of stars*, after the fashion of Mr. Grau. That is what fills the house and, notwithstanding the expense, yields a good profit. For the Italian operas alone have we had, this season, the best available singers. Instead of engaging the singers his patrons want, he is trying to "discipline" them — a very dangerous process. It is true that these artists get much less in Europe than they do at our opera-house; but they are not, as Mr. Conried fancies, dependent upon him. Other American managers are shrewd enough to know their value; hence we have Fritzi Scheff in an opera company of her own, and Calvé and Schumann-Heink preparing to follow her example; we have Nordica, Melba, Bispham, in the concert hall, with Gadske and Campanari ready to follow them. Where is this to end? Operatic affairs have reached a crisis, and this is the time for the subscribers to make known their wishes."

In regard to this critic's censure of Mr. Conried for failing to engage some of the old favorites, it may be suggested that perhaps Mr. Conried was aware that these old favorites could not keep on forever, and that, in his judgment, their powers were on the wane, and

that he believed he was serving the public best by not re-engaging them.

This critic also says that there are painfully few good singers in Europe. Perhaps it would be better to say that there were few who were so advertised as to make the New York public familiar with their names. It is an astounding fact that in a city which prides itself on its musical judgment, so few singers, until the past two or three years, have been able, or allowed, to earn a reputation in New York, — an European reputation has been a pre-requisite. This condition was amusingly described by a young singer who had studied in Paris and prepared for her début. Being patriotic, she determined to make her début in New York, and, arriving from Paris, went at once to a well-know New York agent and stated her desire.

“ My dear child,” said the agent, “ what did you come here for? Take the first steamer back to Paris. Give me the name of your hotel. Mr. X. is going over at the end of this week to find singers. I will give him your address and he shall discover you.”

The lady took the proffered advice, and was discovered.

The critic in the *Nation* also complains



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that the singers who have been popular in opera are drifting into concert. "Where is this to end?" he exclaims. It will never end. There is a great public,—a huge public,—beyond the reach of such opera companies as can afford to employ the great singers. This public wishes to hear the great singers. One who has made a reputation in opera, as Nordica, Schumann-Heink, and Bispham, mentioned in this article, or, notably, Bonci of the present day, can find better compensation, with less wear and tear, by heading his own concert company, than by singing in grand opera. At the time when these singers take to the concert room they have become almost impossible for the operatic manager, on account of their financial demands on the one hand, and the public desire for new singers on the other.

It is said that Signor Bonci in one season of concert work made no less a sum than \$160,000, in 1911 and 1912. Under the circumstances why should Signor Bonci sing in opera?

Bessie Abbott, one of Conried's stars, though born at Ogdensburg, New York, is a member of a prominent Southern family. Misfortune overtook the family when Miss Abbott was on





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BESSIE ABOTT



the threshold of young womanhood, and she, with her sister, was obliged to make her own living. Being gifted with some musical talent the two young women sought and secured engagements in vaudeville, and were known as "The Twin Sisters, — Bessie and Jessie." They played their own accompaniments, Bessie on the banjo, and Jessie on the guitar, and they sang "coon songs," with such success that they were "all the rage."

In 1898 they secured an engagement at the Empire Theatre in London, and sailed for that city full of hope, for the Empire is the summit of the ambition of the vaudeville artist.

On board of the same steamer among the passengers was Jean de Reszké, and he, hearing Bessie sing at the customary ship's concert, was so impressed with her voice, that when the concert was over he stepped forward and introduced himself. In London he heard her sing again, and then gave her a letter of introduction to Madame Freda Ashforth of New York, and advised her to return and study as soon as her Empire Theatre engagement was finished. This she did, and entered upon a long course of study under Madame Ashforth, who then took her to Victor Capoul, in Paris.

There she continued under Madame Ashforth, and under Capoul and Fidele Kœnig, *chef de chant* of the Paris Opera.

Finally M. Gailhard, director of the Opera, heard her and she was engaged for a three years' contract, making her début as *Juliette* in "Romeo et Juliette." Her première was a triumph and she was spoken of as the most perfect *Juliette* ever heard.

In April, 1907, Miss Abott left the Metropolitan Opera Company very abruptly. She was announced to sing in Boston, in "Marta," but, at the last moment, refused to go with the company, and Mr. Conried was obliged to substitute another singer for her. There was some comment in the papers, and Mr. Conried stated that he had engaged Miss Abott to sing at a weekly salary for five years. She now asked to be released, giving as a reason that she must go to Europe to her sister, who was in poor health. Mr. Conried consented, on condition that she did not sign a contract with any other manager, but he learned that she was not actually going abroad. He stated also that she had asked for twenty subscription performances in New York at \$500 each, and demanded that she be permitted to sing at least forty times in the

next season. To this Mr. Conried would not consent, and legal proceedings were begun. Miss Abbott, on the advice of her lawyer, made no statement, and the matter soon ceased to interest the public.

Madame Marie Rappold is the wife of a physician of Brooklyn, and a pupil of Oscar Saenger. She made a success as a concert singer, and in 1905 she appeared at the celebration of the Schiller centenary at the Montauk theatre, when Heinrich Conried was one of the performers in the same program. Conried heard the voice and beheld the woman.

After Madame Rappold sang her first aria Mr. Conried was impressed by the great beauty of her voice and style of singing. When questioned why she had not called to see him at the Metropolitan Opera-House, Madame Rappold told the manager she imagined he had enough singers, but he warmly replied: "Not enough like you; such a voice as yours I am always glad to hear. You must prepare Elsa for me for the next season."

The following November Madame Rappold made her *début* not as Elsa, but as Sulamith in Goldmark's "Queen of Sheba."

Since her first year at the Metropolitan



Opera-House, Madame Rappold has remained a member of the company for every season but one, which she spent in Europe. After filling an engagement in the Royal Opera at Bucharest, Madame Rappold was decorated by the King of Roumania, and when she went to Paris to fill an engagement, the manager of the Opera in Bucharest followed the singer thither, begging her to accept a prolonged engagement in the Roumanian city. About this time, too, Madame Rappold received enticing offers from Berlin and Vienna, but Mr. Gatti-Casazza, of the Metropolitan Opera-House, re-engaged her for the Metropolitan Opera-House. All of this battle over the securing of Madame Rappold took place in Paris early in the summer of 1910. She refused the European offers and returned to her own country.

In 1910-1911, at the Metropolitan Opera-House, Madame Rappold sang rôles like *Aida*, *Leonora* in "Il Trovatore," *Eurydice* in "Orfeo," and other parts. The European critics have declared her to be the ideal *Elsa* and *Elizabeth*. The peculiar timbre of her voice lends itself to singing the rôles of both the lyric and dramatic sopranos.

Rita Fornia is a native of San Francisco,



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MARIE RAPPOLD



where she was known as Rita Newman. Her voice was discovered when she was very young, and when Adelina Patti visited San Francisco, the young girl was filled with a desire to become a second Patti. Her father, at first, would not hear of such a thing, but at length consented to her going to study in New York. There she met Emil Fischer, who told her that her voice was remarkable and that she must go abroad. She telegraphed to her father so frequently and urgently that at last he sent money enough to enable her to go for six months.

Her teacher in Berlin said that her voice was a coloratura soprano, and she made her début in "La Juive" as *Eudoxia* at Hamburg, where Marian Weed and Carl Burrian were singing at the same time. She soon found that coloratura rôles were ruining her voice, so she went to Paris and began her studies anew, and when she appeared again she sang mezzo-soprano parts. This was with the Henry Savage Company in 1906, when she sang such parts as *Ortrud*, *Amneris*, *Sieglinde*, *Carmen*, etc. During this engagement she once sang both *Venus* and *Elizabeth* in the same performance of "Tannhäuser," an epidemic of grip having incapacitated several of the singers.

Conried heard her when she sang in the Montauk Theatre at Brooklyn, and he engaged her for the Metropolitan Opera-House. Her great opportunity came through the illness of Emma Eames. She was called up by telephone after six o'clock and asked to sing *Leonora* that night. She had studied the part but had not rehearsed with the orchestra. Nevertheless, she took advantage of her opportunity and succeeded. Later on she had a somewhat similar experience in Philadelphia, when Madame Sembrich was indisposed and Miss Fornia sang *Rosina* in "Il Barbiere" at twenty-four hours' notice.

Madame Leffler-Burkhardt was born in Berlin, and accomplished most of her vocal study with a pupil of the celebrated Madame Viardot-Garcia, — Anna von Meisner. She began her operatic career in 1890 at Strassburg as a coloratura soprano in light rôles. She then spent a year at Breslau, and a year at Cologne. From 1894 to 1898 she was at Bremen, and there began to sing dramatic parts, such as *Fidelio*, *Isolde*, *Donna Anna*, and *Brünnhilde*. She appeared at Weimar and Wiesbaden, and in 1906 sang *Kundry* at Bayreuth. She obtained leave of absence from Berlin, where she was engaged.



at the time when Conried sought her services, and was thus able to be heard at the Metropolitan Opera-House.

One of the German singers engaged by Conried was Frida Langendorff, who had a voice of great range, flexibility and power, together with dramatic style and musical intelligence. Madame Langendorff inherited her talent from her mother, who was her teacher. Her first professional engagement was at Strassburg opera, after which she visited other German cities and finally was secured by Conried. She sang at Bayreuth in 1904, when she was coached for "Die Walküre" by Madame Wagner. She sang dramatic German parts.

Heinrich Knote was a German tenor, who sang at the Metropolitan Opera-House during Conried's régime, getting leave of absence from Munich where he was engaged. His *Walther* in "Die Meistersinger" was considered the best ever heard in New York excepting (the accounts here interject "of course") Jean de Reszké's, and his success was instantaneous and emphatic. After his first few appearances he proved to be a drawing card, and filled the house almost as surely as did Caruso. In fact, Mr. Conried was spoken of as being a lucky

man to have two first-class tenors at a time when foreign managers were tearing their hair in despair because of the impossibility of securing even second-rate tenors. Mr. Knote sang in New York during several seasons.

At the end of the first season, or rather, in the middle of his second season, the directors of the Metropolitan Opera-House did Mr. Conried the honor of presenting him with a resolution asserting that at no time in the past had operatic performances in New York been given of the same uniform standard of merit as during that season.

The audiences had been unusually large, except for "Parsifal," and this might have been well attended but for two things, — first, the price of seats was doubled, and, second, the production by Henry M. Savage had discounted the Metropolitan production. When the season opened the sale for "Parsifal" amounted to \$38,000 for seven performances. Many of the tickets doubtless fell into the hands of speculators, for one could buy on the street, before the first performance, good seats at half price. For the second performance ten-dollar seats could be bought for two dollars, and for the third no speculator dared risk his repu-

tation by showing himself near the Opera-House.

It was recorded in an account of the season that some amusement had been caused by attempts to prove that Wagner was not wanted by the fashionable patrons of the Metropolitan Opera-House. Some of these society people showed resentment, and tried to disprove the charge by appearing earlier and staying later at the Wagner performances than at others. Monday evenings, in particular, were supposed to have been kept free of Wagner. The refutation of this serious charge as to Wagner, was undertaken by a class of patrons that go to the opera on account of the intermissions, and disliked Wagner chiefly because the auditorium was darkened during Wagnerian performances, — so that really Wagner meant considerable self-sacrifice to them. But the Monday evening subscribers desired also to sacrifice themselves, and began to protest in the newspapers, so that Mr. Conried was obliged to humor them by putting on “Die Meister-singer,” which turned out to be the success of the season.

In later seasons Mr. Conried ran against difficulties. In January, 1906, there were thrilling

accounts of a strike of the chorus in New York. Mr. Conried refused to be dictated to by the labor union to which the chorus belonged, and he decided to do without the chorus. A performance of "Faust" was given in this manner. There were a few cuts, and the orchestra filled in as best it could in certain parts, but the performance was not recorded as one of the most brilliant on record, — and there was little more heard of the strike.

In 1905 Mr. Conried took umbrage at the poor attendance in Boston when the Metropolitan Company visited that city, and decided to punish it the following year by remaining away. What he accomplished by this was chiefly to ensure a welcome in Boston to Oscar Hammerstein, who soon after commenced his operations, and, second, to fix a determination in the hearts of Bostonians to have an opera company of their own, and no longer be dependent for their annual homœopathic dose of opera on the Metropolitan or any other visiting company.

When Heinrich Conried was appointed director of the Metropolitan Opera-House he made various promises in regard to new productions, but the most important of these was to



be the production of "Parsifal," Wagner's last, and, as many people think, his most important opera. By the express wish of the composer, and by European copyright, the performances of "Parsifal" had been confined to Bayreuth since 1882, previous to which date there had been a few representations at Munich for the particular gratification of Wagner's friend and patron, King Ludwig.

It is not our intention to discuss the legal points involved in Mr. Conried's scheme. There was litigation in New York courts, and the controversy was decided in favor of Conried,—Madame Wagner having endeavored to secure an injunction to prevent the production of "Parsifal" in this country. It was generally understood that "Parsifal" was the exclusive possession of Bayreuth until 1913.

The copyright law was effective in Europe and held in check everybody there, but not so Conried,—and Henry M. Savage, who gave the opera in English, and in advance of Mr. Conried, so that when the Metropolitan Company visited the other cities, and presented "Parsifal" at grand opera prices, those who were interested had already had the opportu-



ity to hear, and see, a very good presentation at prices about one third of what Mr. Conried charged.

For years there had been an air of mystery about "Parsifal" on which the Bayreuth productions had thriven. Good American Wagnerites would go to Bayreuth, as others go to Oberammergau, or as good Mahommedans journey to Mecca.

Lectures on "Parsifal" had been given, more or less, for several years, but now the number of lecturers began to exceed the number of audiences, and every lecture was like every other one, simply repeating what had been already published in magazines and newspapers innumerable, so that the public was much too thoroughly prepared when the actual production took place.

Not only were there lectures on "Parsifal," but there were discussions religious, legal, ethical and æsthetic. Not only were musicians involved, but clergymen, lawyers and politicians discussed "Parsifal" to an extent that made the efforts of a mere press agent appear puny and childish. The scruples of religious people were aroused and the opera was condemned as sacrilegious, immoral, and irreligious very fre-

quently by zealous individuals who knew next to nothing about it. It is probable that never in the history of opera has such a deep and absorbing interest been aroused in an operatic *première*.

Mr. Conried's astuteness was the cause of all this remarkable interest, but he was not satisfied to relax his efforts towards success. The financial safety of the enterprise was assured some weeks before the first performance, but there was before him the task of living up to the expectations which had been aroused, and he made every possible effort to ensure artistic success.

In order to disarm such critics as made the charge of irreverence against this New York production, Conried engaged a staff of artists who had been associated with the Bayreuth enterprise.

As conductor he engaged Felix Mottl, one of the most noted German conductors, who had repeatedly superintended "Parsifal" performances at Munich. Anton Fuchs, the *regisseur*, had charge of the performances given under the direction of Wagner himself for King Ludwig. Aloys Burgstaller, who sang the title rôle, was trained by Madame Wagner

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to interpret it according to her ideals, as was also Anton van Rooy, who took the part of *Amfortas*. Milka Ternina, who played *Kundry*, had won fame in the same rôle at Bayreuth. Also Victor Kloepper and several other singers came with the endorsement of Bayreuth. Such a company of artists, trained by Madame Wagner herself, were a sufficient reply to the charge of irreverence. Every detail as to chorus and orchestra was rehearsed unceasingly until each person was perfect in his part, and the same careful preparation was enforced upon the scene shifters, mechanics and electricians, so that every person employed was absolutely familiar with his duties.

To add to the importance of the occasion, "Parsifal" was given as something outside of the regular subscription, and special prices were charged. On account of the length of the opera the first act began at five o'clock in the afternoon, and after the first act there was a long intermission during which the audience was supposed to retire and dine.

The element left in doubt before the first performance was the "atmosphere." Bayreuth was surrounded with certain traditions and conditions which were said by many to make

a performance of "Parsifal" elsewhere practically impossible. Notwithstanding this, the attitude of the audience in New York, and elsewhere, was one of complete self-surrender, and of intense concentration upon the drama and its music, and, according to critics who had heard the opera in Bayreuth, nothing was lacking even in the "atmosphere" necessary for a successful representation.

In Wagner's music dramas, and in "Parsifal" more than any of them, successful interpretation depends upon the perfection of all the factors musical, histrionic, and scenic, in fact, that was Wagner's idea of the music drama of the future,—an idea on which all the later composers have planned their work.

In the Metropolitan Opera-House production the scenic beauty was remarkable, and completed the essential elements.

For the work of the artists we quote from the review written by Mr. Aldrich. After praising the excellent conductorship of Mr. Mottl, he continues: "Madame Ternina's *Kundry* is perhaps the most consummate impersonation that this consummate artist has disclosed. The strange antithesis of which Wagner has compounded this part make it one of the most dif-



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cult to compose and present with conviction; but she has accomplished it. . . . Mr. Burgstaller as *Parsifal* presents many alluring traits in his representation of the guileless simpleton and the authority of the knight returning to claim his kingship. There are temperament and subtlety in his scenes with the flower maidens and with *Kundry*, and his magnetic personality is potent throughout the drama. Yet it cannot be denied that his figure on the stage has a certain clumsiness, and that his acting is marred by the exaggerations and mannerisms of pose and gesture commonly attributed to his training at Bayreuth. Mr. Van Rooy's *Amfortas* is a noble and dignified representation of mental and physical suffering, and his laments are voiced with piercing accents. There is praise due for Mr. Blass's intelligent and picturesque presentation of the old *Gurnemanz*. The flower maidens are a dream of beauty and their beguilement of *Parsifal* is a piece of choral ensemble of rare flexibility and tonal charm. All work together with self-sacrificing devotion to Wagner's ideals."

In short, the production of "Parsifal" was a brilliant artistic success, of which the effect



was largely discounted by too much "anticipation" and — too high prices.

At the conclusion of his second season Heinrich Conried was still on the upward path of his operatic career. In reviewing the season, in *Harper's Weekly* of April 15, 1905, Mr. Lawrence Gilman speaks of him thus:

"At the end of his second season as director of the Metropolitan Opera-House, Mr. Heinrich Conried can point to a notable record. Since the spring of 1903, when he was selected for the control of the Metropolitan as successor to Maurice Grau, he has put America's most important operatic institution on a level with those of Europe in several respects in which it had hitherto been conspicuously inferior; he has introduced to the American public five of the most eminent of living singers; he has supplied new scenery and costumes for many of the works in the Metropolitan repertoire; and he has been the means of removing from monopolistic control and making generally accessible one of the world's supreme masterpieces of music. Moreover, he has done all this in the face of innumerable obstacles and in spite of a lack of qualifying experience; for his career had not been of a kind to make him familiar

with the problems of operatic management in dealing with which his predecessor, Mr. Grau, showed himself so remarkably competent.

“ His claim to distinction is in having maintained his productions upon that high level of individual performance demanded by the opera-loving public of New York, at the same time insisting upon an ideal — unemphasized by his predecessor — of justly balanced and intelligently organized *ensemble*.”

When Oscar Hammerstein announced in 1906 that he intended to open a new opera-house, it was evident that the Metropolitan Opera-House management would have to make still greater efforts in order to keep their prestige with the opera-going public. A new operatic war was inaugurated, which, while it may have caused anxious moments to Mr. Conried and to Mr. Hammerstein, operated immensely to the advantage of the public, as will be seen by the history of the next few seasons. The number of new productions and revivals, the array of singers, the improvement in chorus, in orchestras, in scenery, and, in short, in everything appertaining to grand opera, was very great. In addition to this the spread of grand opera itself to other cities. All these things have

developed since Oscar Hammerstein announced the opening of the Manhattan Opera-House.

Of the singers brought to the Metropolitan Opera-House in the season of 1906-1907 the two who made the greatest sensation were Geraldine Farrar and Lina Cavalieri. They were briefly described in the *Musician*, from which the following is quoted:

“The two most talked of sopranos among those who joined the Metropolitan forces this past year were Geraldine Farrar and Lina Cavalieri. The first named is a young American girl possessed of considerable beauty, who made a quite unprecedented success in Berlin and in other German cities. She has been heard in French opera; as *Elizabeth* in “*Tannhäuser*” and as *Madame Butterfly* in Puccini’s opera. Lina Cavalieri is an Italian of the humblest origin, whose beauty and conquests have furnished all Europe with food for conversation for a number of years. She has been heard in Italian opera only. The fact that she made a Paris and Monte Carlo success did not convince us beforehand of her powers, for even Americans who have remained at home have learned that singers can succeed in those cities and yet fail to meet the standard of American

music lovers. The Cavalieri, however, has proved to possess some interesting qualities. Hers is a voice that is most satisfactorily, if not definitely, described as Italian. It shows considerable lyric quality and often great beauty of tone, which she pours out with that prodigality which is also characteristic of her fellow-countryman, Caruso, an appealing quality if the feat remains within the bounds of good musical taste. It is a voice unevenly developed, with the registers imperfectly connected, and several other evidences of a lack of training. She produces some worn and unattractive tones, and sometimes fails of the pitch. Yet on the whole Madame Cavalieri is an interesting addition to the company. To hear her voice with Caruso's in their native opera, often inspires the American opera lover, as well as the Italian, to cry '*Viva l'Italia.*' "

In October, 1901, cable despatches from Berlin announced that another American girl had set all Europe talking because of her beauty and her musical talent. Miss Geraldine Farrar had made her début to the musical world of Europe in the rôle of *Marguerite* in "Faust" at the Royal Opera-House in Berlin. As she was not yet nineteen years of age her appear-



ance in so difficult and prominent a rôle as this was regarded as phenomenal, and she was hailed by musicians as the Jenny Lind of America, and as a second Patti.

Geraldine Farrar was born in Melrose, Mass., and lived in that city until about 1896, when she went abroad to study. Both her parents were good singers. She is said to have been able to carry a tune with unerring accuracy at the age of three. When she was ten years old she took part in an amateur production at Melrose, and—her singing was not liked. Her voice was so loud and strong that the others seemed proportionately insignificant.

By and bye she was placed as a pupil under Madame Long, of Boston, and this was the beginning of her serious musical study. The next year her father and mother took her to New York and placed her under the care of Emma Thursby, who soon said that she could teach her nothing more,—her voice was already placed, her throat formation was perfect, and she had not the difficulties to overcome that most singers have.

She was one winter in Washington studying technique and interpretation with Victor Capoul, and during this period she sang at the



White House before President and Mrs. McKinley.

It was on her return to Boston that she was taken to the Boston Theatre and introduced to Madame Melba, who, on hearing her sing, said, "I hail you as the coming Jenny Lind of America."

Then the young singer and her mother went to Paris, and a few months later, to Berlin, where she remained and worked hard with her voice, and her dramatic training. She also mastered French, Italian and German.

It was said that before going abroad she refused several handsome offers to appear in opera in this country, and that Mr. Grau even offered her an engagement at \$8000. It was also reported that the salary at which she was engaged for three years at the Berlin Opera-House was larger than any that had ever been offered to so young a singer. Also that she set tradition at defiance by refusing to sing *Marguerite* in any language but Italian, whereas it had been customary to sing it in German in the Royal Opera-House. In fact, Miss Farrar seems to have set other customs in Germany at defiance, for one of the rules of the opera-house was that no persons except performers should

be allowed on the stage during a performance. This prevented Mrs. Farrar from accompanying her daughter, and, as Miss Farrar refused to go without her mother, an appeal was made through the American ambassador to the Kaiser. The rule was set aside in her case, and she was always attended by her mother.

This is said to have set the press against her, and in course of time the attentions of the Crown Prince to her gave opportunity to one of the papers to publish a libellous article on the subject. Miss Farrar called on Ambassador Tower with a request to intercede with the Emperor to put a stop to the scandalous gossiping of the member of his court, and she brought suit against the offending paper.

Having thus thoroughly established herself in Berlin, her fellow countrymen were prepared to give her a rousing welcome on her return to her native land, for she was said to be the first American singer ever signed for a long engagement at the Royal Opera-House in Berlin, she had been asked to sing before the Kaiser at the Wiesbaden Festival in 1902, the Crown Prince of Germany had shown marked devotion to her, she was a friend of the Royal family, and approved of by the "mailed fist,"

at which all Europe trembles, and finally it was reported that one hundred (more or less) prominent Germans had proposed marriage to her.

What American girl, — and some had accomplished wonderful things, — what American girl had ever a career like this?

Miss Farrar was interviewed in 1908 and the interview was printed in the *New York Sun*. Much comment was caused thereby, with which we have little to do in these pages. To the writer the interview seems full of well thought out and pertinent remarks as to the operative conditions which confront the young American singer in her native land. Let us quote a small portion of the interview: “ There are certain pinnacles that cannot be reached except by long climbing. There are psychological poises of thought, feeling, and experience that are long in developing. You cannot do at the beginning of your career what you know you will be able to do at the end of ten or fifteen years. And so the great problem that is interesting me is this: Is the public interested in watching the slow unfolding of a young singer’s talent, or must it have everything offered to it fried brown and curled at the edges? Are they gen-

erous enough to give a chance? Are they content to take what is offered so that it is offered in the right spirit, and help the ongoing with their interest and sympathy? I wonder. They have been accustomed to getting their talent full-blown, ripe from the European opera-houses. Is there place as well for the exuberance of youth that has not yet arrived? I feel like a baby amongst my colleagues, and naturally ask that question of myself frequently."

Let us reply to a few of Miss Farrar's questions.

The public, as represented simply by the Metropolitan Opera-House audiences, especially when the Metropolitan Opera-House had practically a monopoly of grand opera in America, was not at all interested in watching the slow unfolding of a young singer's talent, and must have everything offered to it fried brown and curled at the edges. Even then it was seldom satisfied. The opening of other opera-houses and the establishment of opera in other cities has not only given employment to a host of singers, but has put upon the managers the burden — well, not of making their houses profitable finan-



cially, for opera has always flourished upon failure,—but of losing as little as possible. Consequently, all the singers cannot be high-priced stars, some of the singers must be young and growing singers, who have their opportunity. In Boston, in Chicago and Philadelphia, and at the Metropolitan Opera-House also, there are now many young singers who have had their chance and who are succeeding.

The public is not generous enough to allow a young singer to make several fiascos, but, it has now been shown that the public does take great interest in the young singers who, first taking small parts and disclosing good qualities, are given larger parts and gradually work up a reputation.

There is hardly yet place in the big companies for the exuberance of youth that has not yet arrived, but there is opportunity for its arrival. The more companies, the more opportunities.

Geraldine Farrar was herself subject to more or less depreciatory criticism. Her success in Germany had led New York audiences to expect the almost impossible. If there is anything absolutely unfair to the singer it is to



overdo the praise in advance, and then criticise by the first performance. A singer should be allowed at least a month in which to show his ability in a new place.

The following criticism of Geraldine Farrar appeared in a New York paper after her first appearance: "There are perilously high standards of singing as well as of acting at the Metropolitan, and Miss Farrar did not in all respects touch the former of these. The waltz song (Romeo and Juliet) told the story of both her graceful vocal gifts and their limitations. It disclosed a voice of ample size and wide range, charming so long as it was used in quiet passages, but strident in its upper notes and with a prevailing cold quality in moments of stress."

A more mature criticism was that made by Philip Hale, when Miss Farrar first appeared in Boston in April, 1907, as *Marguerite* in "Faust":

"It is not surprising that Miss Farrar was much liked by the audiences of the Berlin Royal Opera-House. She was young, she was physically attractive, and whatever her vocal faults may have been, her voice was undoubtedly of more beautiful quality than that of any ap-

plauded German soprano. . . . Miss Farrar's voice is a lyric soprano of indisputable beauty and charm — not a dramatic voice and it would not bear forcing, but it is the voice of a *Marguerite*, a *Juliet*, a *Manon*. A fresh and youthful voice with a tender and womanly quality. As a singer pure and simple, she is not yet to be reckoned among the truly great who shine in both lyric and dramatic parts. She is not a mistress of bravura, but as she is to-day her singing is spontaneous and free and it works a spell. . . . Her voice alone would give pleasure if she were not a play actress of much more than ordinary ability. Her *Marguerite* is poetic yet very human. . . . Her facial expression, her gestures and her repose are all eloquent and, wonder of wonders, they are singularly suited, yet without too deliberate attention to the music. . . . Young as Miss Farrar is she has already mastered the great art of preparing a dramatic climax. . . . And what a pleasure it was to see a youthful, charming, graceful *Marguerite*, and not a mature woman, an ineffectively disguised matron, simulating laboriously the amorous enthusiasm of maidenhood! ”

These are criticisms made at the beginning



GERALDINE FARRAR AS MANON



of her American career. During the intervening years Miss Farrar has gained in every respect, and has been one of the strongest attractions whenever she has appeared in opera.

When Geraldine Farrar sang in New York in 1909 Mr. Finck compared her with Madame Calvé in the following words: "America too has produced a Calvé. Her name is Geraldine Farrar. Had she the gift of perfect coloratura, she too would make her hearers shiver with terror in the 'Hamlet' mad scene. That rôle is not in her repertoire, but as *Mignon* she is like Calvé in 'Carmen,' so true to life that one forgets she is acting, and again as in Calvé's case one is so absorbed by the charm of her impersonation that one may fail to realize how beautiful is her song as such. Once more she suggests Calvé by the amazing mobility of her features; every moment her facial expression changes with the words and the tones; an opera glass is needed incessantly lest one may lose subtle details. Geraldine Farrar does not copy Emma Calvé in the least; she was a pupil of Lilli Lehmann and probably never heard Calvé till she came to New York two years ago. But she is an artist of the Calvé type. Belasco tried to induce her to give up



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the operatic stage and be an actress; but that is not to be thought of. Give up that lovely voice,—that art of emotional song? Never.”

Mr. Conried's other leading attraction in the season of 1906-1907 was an Italian singer named Lina Cavalieri. The stories of her career which found their way to this country previous to her arrival, excited unusual interest in her, and when she arrived all agreed as to her beauty though there were widely divergent opinions as to her singing.

It is difficult to discover, amongst the multitude of accounts of her career, the real truth. She was a Roman of humble origin, and was brought up amongst the surroundings of extreme poverty. As a child she had to earn money and help her mother. Some accounts say that she sold programs at a theatre, others that she worked as a factory girl, and others that she sold flowers in the cafés of the Piazza Colonna, and the neighborhood, where her great beauty won her many admirers. One thing is certainly true, that the proprietor of a music hall engaged her to sing,—not on account of her voice, but because he felt that her beauty would prove an attraction.

Again we have conflicting stories. One account says that one of the princes of Italy fell in love with her and educated her, and married her against the wishes of his family. Another account says that while singing at the café she met Leoncavallo, the composer, who gave her lessons and fired her with an ambition to enter the grand opera field. Again another account says that she travelled from town to town with a small company of wandering musicians, singing to the accompaniment of mandolin or guitar. Perhaps a mixture of all three stories may bring us near to the truth. She certainly did not become a Roman princess, she evidently did take music lessons, and there is no reason why she should not have been a member of some travelling company. It is by no means an unusual occupation for an aspiring young singer.

Some time later Cavalieri made her appearance at the Folies-Bergères in Paris. Here she was a rival of Otero, who was then fascinating Paris with Spanish songs and dances. Cavalieri danced the Tarantelle and soon had an immense following. Here, in Paris, comes a mysterious story of a Russian prince, who fell desperately in love with her and married her.

At any rate, she disappeared from her accustomed haunts, and for some time nothing was heard of her. During the interim she had been studying singing under Madame Mariani-Masi and preparing for grand opera. She is said to have made a successful début at Lisbon in December, 1900, and after singing in various Italian cities attained her ambition by making her Roman début at the T  atro Costanzi as *Mimi* in "La Boh  me."

An account published in 1902 says: "This beautiful woman was born at Rome, December 25, 1874, and she was first a caf  -concert singer. Her more serious studies were guided by Mrs. Mariani-Masi. After her d  but at Lisbon, Miss Cavalieri sang *Mimi* in Puccini's *Boh  me* at Naples; and she sang at Warsaw, *Violetta*, *Marguerite*, as well as the other parts. Then she appeared at Ravenna, Palermo, St. Petersburg, Florence and other towns. She returned to Florence two months or so ago, and she had then added to her repertory *Manon* and *Fedora*. A correspondent in Florence says that her improvement as singer and play-actress is marked, and that she no longer depends on her beauty or the past fame of her caf  -concert nights."

Madame Cavalieri sang in America several seasons, Oscar Hammerstein engaging her when her contract with the Metropolitan Company was at an end. In 1908 she departed from New York in a mysterious manner, but returned the following season to the Manhattan Opera-House.

In 1910 she became engaged to and married Robert Winthrop Chanler, a marriage which she said was for comradeship but not for love. In the following year a divorce was granted, after financial arrangements had been agreed upon. Madame Cavalieri was to have returned to America in the season of 1910-1911, but much discussion ensued, the public resenting her behavior towards Mr. Chanler, and the managers declaring that her private life had nothing to do with her career as an artist. Whatever may be the correct theories in such cases Madame Cavalieri did not return to America.

As to her artistic standing compared with other singers of the Metropolitan and Manhattan Opera-Houses, Madame Cavalieri was not one of the highest artistic rank. Without her personal beauty she would probably never have been engaged at either of those houses. One of the most concise and best estimates of her



was published in the *Boston Transcript*, April 4, 1908:

“ Miss Cavalieri is counted an interesting personality. She is a student of the theatre, and not for nothing has she watched the mistresses of acting at high pitch — Bernhardt or Duse. The French word for Cavalieri’s beauty is ‘troublant,’ and it used to run up and down the theatre last summer when she was singing and acting *Thais* in Paris. It is a beauty that has its fire and that is the mobile mask of a hot and tireless energy of will. If will could make a mistress of the art of song, she would long since have been such. If will could make an enthralling operatic actress, she would have been such as early.”

When Oscar Hammerstein engaged Lina Cavalieri for the Manhattan Opera-House he had the intention of letting her sing *Thais*, in which rôle she had been very successful in Paris. He had, however, failed to take into account another lady in his company. As soon as she heard of this engagement, or intention, Mary Garden cabled her resignation. “ *Thais* ” was her opera, she said. Whatever “ *Thais* ” was in America, she had made it, and she would not remain in the company if any other person



were allowed to sing this rôle. Madame Cavallieri, she said, excelled in Italian rôles, while she herself excelled in French parts, and, of course, there was no such thing as jealousy in the matter.

Hammerstein replied to her in a most diplomatic manner. He had two contracts with his singers, he said. The first was written, the second was unwritten. The latter was based on loyalty and mutual respect. Miss Garden had always been loyal, and they (he and she) were good friends. If the occasion had caused her anguish he would remove the cause, — and the name of Madame Cavallieri was stricken from the announcement of “Thais.”

The disturbance spread amongst the singers and musicians of the company, and there was enmity between the French and the Italian members. To such lengths did it go that even Cleofonti Campanini, the conductor, was drawn into the controversy, which is said to have been the cause of his resignation, at the end of the season, from the Manhattan Company.

Having reaped a large amount of glory from the production of “Parsifal” Mr. Conried next decided to produce the much talked of new opera of Richard Strauss — “Salomé.” It is

not necessary to enter at length into the story of the opera, which is known to every one who reads the Bible. The libretto was written by Oscar Wilde, and is said to be the most dramatic play that he ever wrote. As a drama it had been played in New York in 1905 by the Progressive Stage Society, and it had been given at the Irving Place Theatre in 1906.

On its production at Dresden the music was described as "grandiose and staggering in its vehemence," — Wagner surpassed, — voices quite secondary. "Strauss has given the orchestra something," said the critic, "which only perfect musicians perfectly trained and conducted could master, and so varied is the score, so full of color, that it is quite impossible for any but the largest and best equipped opera-houses to produce it as it ought to be produced. . . . The opera is packed with 'motifs,' every person and every passion has its 'motif'; the result is an exasperating tangle of 'motifs' impossible to unravel. The orchestration is most remarkable, — the strings have sometimes as many as twenty parts, in order to obtain unusual effects in color." Mr. Lawrence Gilman in a hand-book which he issued at the time of "Salomé's" production wrote:

“ Strauss requires his violas and ’cellos to play many parts immemorially delegated to violins; makes his double basses cavort with the agility and abandon of clarinets; writes unheard of figures for the tympani players, and demands of the trombonist that he transform his instrument into a flute.”

In addition to new effects on old instruments, new instruments were introduced, notably the “ heckelphone,” which is described as a cross between an English horn and a bass clarinet.

In parts of the opera some of the sections of the orchestra play in keys half a tone removed from the mode being used at the same time by other groups of the orchestra. At one place the orchestra plays in B flat major while *Salomé* sings steadily on B natural, and in almost every phrase the singers end in a different key from the one in which they began. The music displays the greatest genius in the very episodes where it concerns itself with the unnatural, criminal elements of the story.

It is related that the production of “ *Salomé* ” caused a coolness between Strauss and the Kaiser, for Strauss was informed that his Majesty considered the writing of such an

opera on such a theme as "Salomé" unworthy of him and not conducive to the advancement of pure art. Strauss replied that he was not going to take lessons from any one, no matter how highly placed, unless his inherent knowledge on the subject was superior to his own. The German Emperor decided that "Salomé" should not be sung at Berlin.

After all the tremendous amount of comment and criticism and excitement in Europe Conried produced this opera at the Metropolitan Opera-House in January, 1906. The cast was: *Salomé*, Olive Fremstadt; *Herodias*, Marion Weed; *Herod*, Carl Burrian; *John the Baptist*, Anton van Rooy.

The comment upon the opera was voluminous. The Congregational ministers made a protest against it, as did many other bodies of people and individuals, but the matter was set at rest, so far as New York and Mr. Conried were concerned, through a letter sent to him by the directors of the Metropolitan Opera-House in which they said that the performance of "Salomé" was objectionable and detrimental to the best interests of the Metropolitan Opera-House and protesting against any repetition. This was doubly disappointing to Conried be-



cause the presentation of this opera was made at a benefit performance for himself.

Some three or more years later Oscar Hammerstein produced "*Salomé*" and the storm began again. Mary Garden appeared as *Salomé*, Madame Doria as *Herodias*, Hector Dufranne as *John*, and Dalmores as *Herod*. In Boston and Chicago vigorous protests were made, and Oscar Hammerstein politely withdrew the opera, after having made himself the centre of a newspaper storm. And here is a lesson to be learned,—if an opera is too bad for the people, or the people too good for an opera, silence will kill it more effectually than vehement protest.

The following estimate of the season's new singers was published in the "*Musician*," in July, 1907:

"Frau Fleischer-Edel, who was imported for Wagnerian rôles, is a not uncommon type of German singer, although her voice is an organ of considerable beauty and power. Unfortunately it is tainted with many of the vices of tone production characteristic of that school of Wagnerian singers whose methods have never recommended themselves to lovers of beautiful singing.



“The same criticism applies to the Wagnerian tenor, Carl Burrian, a Bohemian from the Dresden Opera-House. Burrian is an intelligent artist, but not one in the same class with Knote, and his voice lacks the natural beauty of Burgstaller’s. Nevertheless, those who had the good fortune to be present at that remarkable performance of Strauss’s extraordinary opera at the Metropolitan are not likely to forget Burrian’s marvellous interpretation of *Herod*. However the critic may feel about ‘Salomé,’ musically or ethically, Burrian’s *Herod* must stand with the *Mime* of Reiss and the *Loge* of Van Dyck, as one of the finely wrought creations of the operatic stage.

“Madame Kirkby-Lunn, the English contralto, did not sing here for the first time this season, but her previous appearances have been so few that her beautiful voice has not been so generally appreciated before.

“Rousselière, the new French tenor at the Metropolitan Opera-House, proved a singer of uneven qualities. His voice at times had much beauty of tone, but he had, unfortunately, the tendency to false intonation to which singers of his nationality seem peculiarly liable.

“Rousselière was disappointing on the

whole. Vocal affectations marred what would otherwise have been enjoyable passages, and when his opportunity came in the shape of top notes he too frequently *drove* them vociferously to be agreeable. His *Romeo* was a manly, if not a handsome picture.

“ Carl Burrian came to this country in 1907, with the reputation of being a fine singer with an extraordinary voice, and an accomplished musician. He was a student in Berlin but made his first operatic appearance in Hamburg, after which he went to Buda-Pesth. When Maurice Grau persuaded Anthes to break his contract with the Dresden authorities and come to New York, Burrian was called to Dresden to take his place.

“ Burrian’s most notable characters are *Siegfried*, *Siegmond*, *Tristan*, and *Herod* in Strauss’s ‘*Salomé*,’ which part he created in 1907 at the Dresden Opera-House. That Burrian did not please all people in this country may be gathered from the following criticism: ‘Burrian, the new German tenor, is of the strong-lunged, steel-toned, hard-fisted, work-a-day Teutonic variety,—strenuous, intelligently strenuous, but little else.’ ”

This, however, is hardly a fair or detailed

criticism of Burrian's artistic ability, and perhaps the account given by Mr. H. T. Parker, of the *Boston Transcript*, of Mr. Burrian's performance of *Herod* will show that he has great merit:

“ Burrian is more than a declaimer of Strauss's broken phrases above a writhing orchestra. He sings, indeed, according to the German school as it now goes, but according to that school in its best estate. He has its clearness of articulation, but it is an articulation of the phrases of the music as well as of the text. He maintains, oftener than he chops, the melodic line. He sings with freedom and he sings in tune. His voice has the tenor quality, a little hardened, it is true, but not often pinched or gritty. He sings with intelligence, and he clothes his tones, when he will, with an emotional quality that is more than energy. They can come even sensuously to the ear.

“ In no one of his parts has he touched the vividness of character that makes the *Herod* a subtle, uncanny, creeping and haunting thing. He takes his *Siegmond* and *Siegfrieds* and *Tristan* with clear and straightforward capability. There is not much individuality in his impersonation of them; seldom does a partic-

ular stroke in action or tonal quality stir the listener. Yet with all this prudent soundness they are neither uninteresting nor inert. Perhaps 'businesslike' is the truest word for Mr. Burrian, with his *Herod* for the exception to prove the rule."

Carl Burrian had various legal troubles, — when he came to America he broke his contract with the Dresden Royal Opera, and the King of Saxony brought suit against him in the courts of Prague, through Count Seebach the intendant. The King won his suit and Burrian was condemned to pay a fine of \$3700. In the meantime, while Burrian was at the Metropolitan Opera-House, he signed a contract to sing at the Royal Opera-House in Vienna, the fine being paid by the Vienna management.

Burrian left America in February, 1912, and, though he had won a large measure of artistic success, he departed declaring that he was glad to get out of the country, and that its so-called liberty was a myth. Under the circumstances, which had to do with his private life, perhaps this was the highest praise that he could have bestowed upon the American people.

Mr. Burrian took opportunity to express some views about American audiences, for the



following "interview" appeared in the *New York Times* in 1908: "When opera in New York begins at eight, the audience arrives about nine. It is not good form to remain after eleven. In the boxes there is a continual coming and going, and people look at each other instead of what is happening on the stage. The climax of the opera is the intermission, when women in grand toilettes promenade on the arms of their escorts. Bayreuth may well hide its diminished head. If the tenor has a solo in the latter part of the opera he must sing it to himself, — the audience is no more. The restaurants have claimed it. The way in which Wagner is cut is fearful. To hear a thing quickly is the motto of the new world. Mahler has had to submit in silence to this cutting of Wagner's operas. He is a great artist and wants to set German opera on its feet in America. American audiences flock to French and Italian opera but not to German."

There have been lusty efforts to set German opera on its feet during the past fifty or more years, and it does not seem to remain erect. Perhaps it is topheavy, but it certainly does have an enthusiastic, if not large following.

In regard to the inattention of audiences



perhaps the only remedy would be to put the boxes in the gallery, and the gallery seats where the boxes usually are. The singer is not aware of the presence of the true opera lover stowed away under the roof, parting with its hard-earned dollar, and frequently making a real sacrifice for the sake of the music.

Claude Rousselière is the son of a blacksmith of St. Nazaire, France, and was brought up with the idea of following his father's trade, which he did for two years. Then his voice attracted notice and he went to Paris, presented himself for matriculation at the Conservatoire, without preparation, and was accepted on the spot. Three years later, at the age of twenty-three, he won the first prize for singing, and was engaged to sing at the Grand Opera in Paris. Although he has had many opportunities offering great temptation, he has steadily refused to leave the Grand Opera, and until his engagement for America, is said to have made only one exception, when he went to Brussels to create the part of *Prometheus*.

Rousseliere has a clear ringing voice, and is personally much liked among singers.

When Madame Morena first appeared in **America** in February, 1908, she was described

as one of the youngest singing actresses of opera at Munich, — her Semitic comeliness, her personal charm, her imagination and expression as an actress and the emotional coloring of her tones have established her with the public in Germany. Munich knows her chiefly in the parts of the younger women of Wagner's operas, — *Elsa*, *Elizabeth*, *Senta*, and *Sieglinde*, and especially as a remarkable *Leonora* in Beethoven's "Fidelio."

"Morena, — tall, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, but not stout. Well formed and of an ideal build for the Wagnerian heroic rôles. Her features are classic in their regularity, — her dark hair, parted in the middle, waves simply back from her forehead; her warm brown eyes gaze out frankly from under level brows. Although much heralded, she came up to and surpassed expectations, when she made her début in 1908." Thus she was pictured.

Berta Morena was born at Mannheim of poor parents, and for years it seemed as if her talents would not be known outside of her home world. Her introduction to the larger world of music came about through Franz von Lenbach, a great painter, who admired her beauty, when he met her in Munich, and introduced her to



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BERTA MORENA



Ernest von Possart, the director of the Royal Opera. Von Possart heard her sing, and after a brief course of study she was engaged by him and made her first appearance as *Agathe* in "Der Freyschutz." She was then only nineteen years of age, and she revealed so much promise that she was hailed as a rising star. Her operatic career being now really begun, she appeared as *Selika* in "L'Africaine," *Senta* in "The Flying Dutchman," *Elizabeth* in "Tannhäuser," *Santuzza* in "Cavalleria Rusticana," *Sieglinde* in "Die Walküre," and the there *Brünnhildes*, and as *Isolde* in "Tristan und Isolde."

Soon after her arrival in America it was realized that she had made an impression upon the public. One critic wrote that she had made a greater impression than any German singer since Ternina's time. "In a sense, Berta Morena has been a pupil of Ternina, for when she went to Munich to succeed to many of the parts taken by Ternina, the elder singer was generous of help and counsel."

Practically Miss Morena made her reputation and had her career in Munich, but in more recent years her fame spread and brought her to other houses, and eventually to America.



In 1908, when she first visited this country, she was described as follows: "She is young and comely with not a trace of housewifely savor and unconscious provinciality that hung about most of her sister German singers. Distinctly she is a woman of the world. Moreover, and again in agreeable contrast to most of her recent predecessors, she is alert and elastic in body and mind. As *Sieglinde*, as *Elizabeth* or as *Leonora*, she is good to see. Once, as the report from Munich goes, she was a cold statuesque beauty. The comeliness has ripened, warmed and softened into a dark-haired, dark-eyed, clear-skinned comeliness of singularly sympathetic charm. It is mobile now, and Miss Morena's face and figure are elastic now to whatever she would have them express. Face and form touch the spectator's imagination with womanly suggestion when she disguises herself as *Elizabeth*, and as *Leonora* her features and figure and the wholesome charm that springs from her make her becomingly illusive as the wistful, anxious, pretending and mysterious youth that is *Fidelio*. So in all she has done Miss Morena has shown the pictorial sense that wins the eye and the imagination. She commands a rather unusual sympathy, a quick

and favoring predisposition to all that she is about to do.

“ This same sympathetic quality dwells in her tones. Her voice is full, warm, clear, truly transparent in its upper notes, smooth and supple in all its range. It has beauty itself; it is used with a skill that is rare among the younger German singers, and it has unmistakable and immediately persuasive emotional qualities. She has knowledge and training in singing, and she respects her medium. As *Leonora* in ‘ *Fidelio* ’ she heightens often the expressive quality of Beethoven’s relentless music, and her tones seem the voice of the character and the moment. Still more in *Elizabeth* her voice is potent with feeling, and with the peculiarly womanly and sympathetic feeling that is the unique trait of Miss Morena’s temperament. The emotional quality does not command, it persuades and warms the listener. Thus she imparts character, mood and passion with her tones, but she is persuasive in the purely histrionic side of her art. There she does not go much beyond intelligent convention, but she keeps it unlabored, and infuses it with the same persuasion that is in all she does. The magnetism of sympathy is in her, and she has

stirred her audiences to a quick and warm liking that has rarely rewarded a German singer in America in recent years. Unmistakably she has the sense of beauty."

In March, 1912, an interview was printed in one of the musical journals in which Miss Morena gave expression to some opinions which are worth repeating. The first will be of interest to musical students, and refers to the advice given her by Von Possart, who is a celebrated actor, in regard to the expression of emotion. She said: "Possart told me to watch and notice how things were done, but above all to *get into the skin* of the characters I was singing, to feel the emotions they were supposed to be feeling and then to act in the way that I thought they would act under the circumstances. That is precisely what I did and that has been my method to the present day. I feel in my own heart what the one that I am personating feels. It must be sincere. I cannot make believe or imitate. If I were only to endeavor to sham emotion, to simulate feeling, nothing would come of it. If I am expressing joy on the stage I am, for the moment, truly joyous. That is the way, I should think, every singer would go about it. However, individualities differ, so

one cannot lay down rules. Curious though, isn't it, that I need the make-up, the scenery, the stage settings, in order to feel and, consequently, to act at all."

The next matter of remark will also be of interest to the students of opera, as well as to American audiences. It refers to the "specialization" which dominates everything in America, and from which the opera singer is not immune: "One does get so tired of singing the same rôles over and over again, especially when there are only four or five of them. In Germany an artist gets a chance to do a great variety of parts; in fact one has to, because there we do not have a special company to do Italian works, another for French operas, and a third for German pieces. And the repertoire of even the smaller houses have to be so much more comprehensive. If they do Wagner and the modern things, they have not therefore abandoned 'Les Huguenots,' 'L'Africaine,' 'La Juive,' and all the rest of the old-time favorites. They have far more need of them than they do here, for the Germans hold to them more tenaciously, even if they are worn."

To which the reply of the average American



opera-goer would probably be that nothing but "the best" will do here. Does not the impresario announce that he has engaged Madame So-and-so to sing certain parts, thus giving the impression that the Madame is a specialist, although she probably has a repertoire of thirty or more operas?

The following will be of interest to opera-goers in general, as it has a bearing on operatic manners in America as compared with those of Germany: "I do like American audiences, but there is always one thing that puzzles me. Why must they arrive at the opera after it has started and leave before it is over, whereas when in Europe they are the most devout of all listeners? Yes, that is one of the most amazing phenomena that I have ever remarked. At the festivals in Munich the Americans sit from beginning to end in the profoundest, most reverent contemplation, as though they were at a religious service. Their attentiveness surpasses that of the Germans themselves at such times, or the English or any others. But here! Never does the whole audience dream of being on hand for the start, nor does it remain till the close. To the singer on the stage this is most nerve-racking. It takes all my power of con-



centration sometimes to keep my nerves from giving way, for it is a terrible strain to be conscious of this continual disturbance in the audience, to hear a sort of constant hum, as of a swarm of bees. Even though the artist may not be able to see what is passing in the auditorium the sense of disturbance is born to him very keenly."

The answer to this may be, perhaps, that the Americans who go abroad to hear opera are mostly music lovers whose occupations are away from the few cities in which opera can be heard. They go as a matter of business and education, while a very large proportion of the audiences in American opera-houses consist of those who go as a matter of pleasure, or regard the opera as a social function. Such people at least occupy the seats from which disturbance would be most apparent to the performer.

Miss Morena also remarks pertinently on the size of American opera-houses: "The auditorium of the Metropolitan seems really too large — too large for even Wagner operas. The distances in it are so great that all sense of intimacy between singers and audience is lost. Facial expression counts for nothing at

all unless one uses one's opera glasses continuously, and this, in the end, must mean a great strain. Yet the play of features is of such importance in Wagner! And, besides, in proportioning one's gestures to the size of this house one has often to exaggerate them, and this makes them seem very foolish. There is no reason to suppose that the Wagner operas would sound too heavy in a smaller place. The Prinz Regenten Theatre in Munich, and even the Bayreuth house are very much smaller, and yet no one ever complains that they are not large enough. Why, Bayreuth seats only twelve hundred. A singer feels so little on the stage of the Metropolitan and it seems as if he must go to all sorts of extremes to make clear his action to the people in the remote parts of it. Then there is also the great temptation to force the voice, although this is unnecessary, as the acoustics of the place could hardly be better."

Perhaps the best reply to this comment is that the price which the impresario is obliged to pay to the singers in this country is so much larger and the expenses generally so far exceed those of Germany, especially in the cities where opera is subsidized, that even with the

greater seating capacity opera has seldom been made to meet its expenses.

The following review appeared in one of the leading musical journals in 1912:

“ Berta Morena’s *Sieglinde* is not new to New Yorkers, and has been acclaimed previously as one of the commanding portrayals in the Wagnerian annals of this metropolis. The rôle requires, before all things, loveliness of appearance and charm of voice, then gentle womanliness and thoroughly human appeal. All those requisites are Madame Morena’s in generous measure, and she gave of them freely and fully last Thursday afternoon, making her *Sieglinde* contribution a joy to the soul of even the most fastidious Wagner enthusiast. Plasticity and grace in gesture and masterful command of tone production and the entire gamut of emotional inflections again were striking features of the Morena performance. She has made the *Sieglinde* character her own, and is one of the Wagnerian impersonators who may be said unreservedly to represent the exact ideal Wagner had in mind when he penned the music and fashioned the actions of the most sympathetic of all that composer’s heroines.”

“ Madame Morena’s *Elsa* is a movingly beautiful impersonation, one of the loveliest ever witnessed on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera-House. First, a vision of girlishness as she appears before the King, singing the ‘ Dream ’ with perfect repose and a vocal art that was faultless. Every gesture, every shade of expression on the classic countenance was a study, as she is questioned about the knight of her fancies. When the knight does arrive, one beholds again a transformation of the eyes and features, all indicative of ecstasy, surprise and tenderness. It is the art of facial expression, of gesture, of emotion — the great art of acting — that Madame Morena has mastered, and the command of it constitutes her a great artist. In the more emotional scenes, one was moved again by her temperament and dramatic force. *Elsa*, which every aspiring débutante imagines is a part easily learned, is in fact one of the most difficult rôles, demanding of the singer the widest possible range of dramatic expression. The visionary *Elsa* of the first act is not the same woman of the third act, where, overtaken by curiosity, she insistently exacts the truth concerning her lord’s origin. In this third act Madame Morena was stri-



kingly forceful in voice and action, as in other moments she was all gentleness and reserve.”

Lillian Grenville, whose family name is Goertner, is a native of New York. She was educated at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Montreal, and while singing at vespers her voice was noticed by M. Fortier, the music teacher, who predicted a great future for her. Two years later Mrs. Goertner took her daughter to Paris and Naples to study singing. Although her mother did not want her to go on the stage Miss Goertner sang for the director of the opera-house at Nice and was engaged. She took her mother's maiden name for the stage, and after Nice sang at the Teatro Lyrique in Milan and at the San Carlo in Naples. In five years she won a reputation as an opera singer in France and Germany, and eventually came back to America and became a member of the Metropolitan Company.

Jane Noria was well known in America under her proper name of Josephine Ludwig. She is a native of St. Louis, and sang two seasons in Henry M. Savage's English Opera Company. Then she went abroad to get experience in the world of Grand Opera. She sang several sea-



sons in France and Italy before coming back to her native land.

Henrietta Wakefield was, when she joined the Metropolitan Company, its youngest contralto. Her career began when, at twelve years of age, she was a member of the choir of the North Presbyterian Church in New York, her native city. She was a pupil of Emily Winant, who is still remembered as an excellent church and oratorio singer.

Mr. Conried heard her sing and engaged her, and she made her début in the part of *Adrienne Lecouvreur* with Caruso in the cast. When Gustav Mahler was conductor Mrs. Wakefield was cast for the *Peasant Mother* in "The Bartered Bride," and *Cieca* in "La Gioconda." She has had parts in many of the standard operas, and has been busy in recent years with concert engagements after the opera season.

Feodor Chaliapine attained his prominence in the operatic world only after trying many other occupations. He was born at Kazan, where he learned to read and write, and was then apprenticed to a shoemaker. At the age of sixteen he worked in a shop at Kazan opposite to which was a baker's shop in which was employed Maxim Gorky, who had not then be-

gun to write. Later, Chaliapine became forwarding clerk in the service of the Ural Railway Company, at Oufa. Near him again was Gorky, engaged at testing wagon wheels and in shunting operations.

Chaliapine again changed his occupation and worked at loading melons on a cargo boat for the princely stipend of seventeen cents a day. He was fond of the theatre, and now and then would throw up his occupation and join a company of strolling players. He was in turn comedian, singer in operetta, street vender, handy man at the theatre in Tiflis, porter, chorister, and eventually became a pupil of Professor Oussotof of Tiflis, who gave him his first real lessons in singing. These led to such good results that he was engaged at the opera at St. Petersburg. Like most Russians (apparently) he has been imprisoned on suspicion of political intrigue — he was a friend of Gorky.

The following criticism appeared after his performance in “*Mefistoféle*”: “Chaliapine is undoubtedly an artist even if his ideals are not praiseworthy. His physical appearance ought not to create greater admiration than his splendidly rotund voice and his eloquent declamation. His interpretation of *Mefistoféle* was

splendidly picturesque, but did not please the critics, calling to mind the vulgarity of conduct which his fellow-countryman, Gorky, presents with such disgusting frankness in his stories of Russian life. When he appears on the Brocken he is bestiality incarnate."

Another account of him is more complete: "Chaliapine, the Russian basso, is a man of large physical presence: his voice is as tremendous as his physical aspect; at one moment its suavity caresses; at another its power overwhelms; he has a lively histrionic sense; his notions of costume are pictorial, not to say eccentric; on and off the stage he loves the romantic pose; and he is equally impressive in parts as different as *Mefistoféle* in Boito's like-named opera, and the portentously comic *Basilio* of the 'Barber of Seville.' Distinctly he makes his audiences 'sit up'—the first bass singer to accomplish this feat in America in many a year."

On Conried's retirement Mr. Henderson reviewed the situation in an article published in the *New York Sun*. "The taste of the public to-day is far below that of the public which attended the performances in the old Academy of Music twenty-five years ago. All that a

singer has to do in order to have success is to sing loud, and fast or high, and if he can do two of these at once he is great. If he can do all he is greatest. Refinement of style, perfect beauty of voice from top to bottom, intelligence in phrase and nuance, acquaintance with correct method of delivering the music of any particular period or composer, count for nearly nothing. The antics of Chaliapine, the enticing physical industry of Geraldine Farrar, the inexcusable slaughter of measures of *Marguerite* by Mary Garden, are applauded as much as the vocal feats of Tetrizzini. All these we owe to steady and persistent debasement of public taste by downward movements of standards at the Metropolitan Opera-House."

This view was perhaps too pessimistic, and may have been the reason for Miss Garden's opinion, expressed in an article in *Everybody's Magazine* in which she remarks thus: "Critics! I once heard a critic defined as a man who walks at the head of the procession crying, 'Come on!' But I rather agree with the other version, that a critic is a man who walks at one side of the procession crying 'Come off!' Those dear, sweet, well-meaning elderly gentlemen, called critics, who don't live



with us to-day, ought to be put tenderly on the shelf, having passed the age limit, just as singers pass it. Their usefulness is over when their minds and hearts refuse to work, just as a singer's usefulness is over when his voice refuses to work. Certain of them . . . greet every attempt to do something new, to bring a fresh message to the stage, to give the young a chance to shake up the old routine and bounce people out of their ruts into the broad road of progress, not with encouragement, nor with tolerance, but with scorn and jeers. Put them on the shelf, I say, and put young blood in. If America is striding forward into a new appreciation of opera, and an appreciation of new opera, it isn't the old fogies who are the leaders of the game. The leaders are the young; leaders are always the young. These old fogy critics with their stilted and stunted ideas, once fought valiantly for Wagner, against the old fogies of their day. Now they are condemning Richard Strauss and Debussy and Reger. It is time they fell back and young critics took their places. The banner of artistic progress is only to be borne on by men with young enthusiasms and by those who march breast forward. No wonder the old fogies don't see whither we are



going: they are looking backward!" Probably Miss Garden did not know how young some of the critics are, nor does she appear to have studied the individuality of style and vocabulary affected by some of them, which are naturally of more importance in the eye of the critic, than the singer or the opera. There is a large variety of critics.

The fact that Mr. Conried became the subject of critical attack was, perhaps, largely due to his failing health, for in 1906 he was obliged to go abroad. On his return in 1907 he talked of all that he was going to do, but he was never really able to resume his active control of the Metropolitan Opera-House. His resignation followed, and he returned to Europe, where he died.

When Conried took up the management of Grand Opera at the Metropolitan Opera-House, there were a great many reforms which he proposed to inaugurate. Of these the abolition of the "Star" system was one. He would have a more perfect ensemble, and rely less upon the one great singer. It was not long before he found that the star system, or something of the kind, was essential to success, for audiences would not get together to hear unknown singers.

Grau had already set the pace with his "all star" combinations, and now Conried found that the only way to secure both the perfect ensemble and the audience was by having a complete outfit of stars. He tried to "discipline" his singers, and while many people will agree that this was perfectly justifiable, he succeeded in getting rid of several of the established favorites. Some of these retired permanently, others went into opera elsewhere, and some have dallied with opera at intervals.

Towards the end of his career he was less successful in pleasing the public. He met with heavy reverses in the San Francisco earthquake, for his company was in that city at the time of the disaster. In December, 1906, Mr. Conried suffered a paralytic, or apoplectic shock. A Swiss specialist came to America to take charge of him, and for a long time his illness remained a mystery and he conducted the affairs of the opera from his private room. When he sailed for a foreign sanatorium the question of a successor became vital. He returned, however, and held his post until the spring of 1908, when he resigned and retired to Meran in the Austrian Tyrol, where he died in April, 1909.

Many anecdotes are told of Conried, but those which are of most interest to us, are those dealing with his lack of musical knowledge, and with his dictatorial manner. On one occasion, we are told, he had engaged a mezzo-soprano to sing the part of the first Rhine-daughter, in "Rheingold." Felix Mottl was the conductor, and when he came to the rehearsal he protested to Conried. Miss X. was a charming lady and an excellent singer, but her voice was not what is wanted, or what Wagner wanted for that part. "Now you know that, Mottl," answered Conried, "and so did Wagner and so do the singers; but does the *public* know that?"

An amusing case is cited, in which Conried was right, however, about a lady whom he had engaged in Germany to come over and teach singing in his opera school, as he called it. On board the steamer she fell and broke an arm. As it was quite impossible for her to play the piano in order to accompany her pupils she asked Conried to provide an accompanist. "I engaged you, madame," he said, "with two arms, and when you arrived here with one only it was no fault of mine." So the lady had to pay for the accompanist herself.

At one time Conried had shown his least

pleasant side to the members of the press, and the press had ceased to praise inartistic performances at the Metropolitan Opera-House long before the Manhattan Opera-House opened. When the opening of the latter house was greeted with a loud burst of approval Mr. Conried was much enraged. Sending for the very courteous gentleman who was then his secretary he said, "You see now how I have suffered from the result of your personal unpopularity. This would never have happened if the gentlemen of the press did not dislike you so much." He dismissed the secretary, and became less positive with the press. Hammerstein's success was especially galling to him as they had been formerly associated, and he felt that a manager who had achieved the Metropolitan Opera-House could not have a rival.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MANHATTAN OPERA - HOUSE UNDER OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN

IN 1906 there came forth from the ranks of theatrical managers one, Oscar Hammerstein, who announced that he would give Grand Opera, and forthwith built a house for that purpose, without any directors, trustees, corporations and other impediments to efficiency which are associated with almost every large business enterprise.

Within the space of three years Oscar Hammerstein produced more new works, that is to say, works that were new to America, than the Metropolitan Opera-House had brought forth in the previous ten years, during which the Metropolitan Opera-House had been under the management of Abbey, Schoeffel, and Grau; of Grau alone, and of Heinrich Conried. He stimulated the interest in opera which is to-day greater than ever before and which is spreading all over the country. To a great extent he



has put an end to the reign of "the Star," for, in former days, the singer was everything. To-day a new production generally brings a well filled house, and Grau's old saying, that to insure a comfortably empty house he had only to announce a new opera at the Metropolitan Opera-House, no longer holds good.

Some day, when the biography of Oscar Hammerstein is written or when he publishes his "Reminiscences," there will be some interesting reading. Apparently Hammerstein was always getting into difficulties, yet his difficulties seemed to help business. He had differences with his singers, he was continually bringing suit against somebody or having suit brought against him, but nobody ever suffered by the process, and it was all duly announced in the papers, that is to say, the beginning of the suit was announced, the end vanished into thin air.

Oscar Hammerstein was born in Berlin in 1847. He ran away from home with only thirty dollars in his pocket, and when he reached New York and was in a starving condition he found a sign on Pearl Street, "Cigarmakers wanted. Paid while you learn." He applied for a job and got it, and lived a year on eight dollars a week. Meanwhile he wrote articles on cigar-

making, and within five years became editor of a trade publication. He invented an ingenious process for making cigars, and patented it. While making cigars he wrote "musical atrocities," to use his own phraseology. He commenced his managerial career by opening a theatre in Harlem, called the Harlem Opera-House, which has for some time been used for moving pictures. In this establishment his artistic taste was plentifully illustrated, and a long season of light opera, under Heinrich Conried, was given at great financial loss.

He then built another theatre at 125th Street and Fourth Avenue, and called it the Columbus Theatre. It has since been used for vaudeville.

Then followed the first Manhattan Opera-House on West 34th Street, where Macy's store now stands. Here he made great efforts, far ahead of the times, to inaugurate his operatic career. Grand Opera well given, met with great losses, but the financial tide was turned when Bial took the house and turned it into a variety theatre, with such stars as Yvette Guilbert, Dan Leno, Albert Chevalier, Loie Fuller, etc.

Following this came the Olympia at Long Acre Square, which established a new theatre district. Losses were sustained here also, and

Hammerstein one day walked out dispossessed and as poor as when he began. Even a benefit arranged by his friends turned out a loss, and every one supposed that Oscar Hammerstein was ruined.

Nothing daunted, however, he secured some land at 42nd Street and 7th Avenue, and built a theatre, creating again a new theatre district and owning what was called a Broadway Theatre for a Seventh Avenue rental.

He then built the Hackett Theatre and the Belasco Theatre. His enterprise in the new Manhattan Opera-House is referred to elsewhere, but after he had abandoned this greatest undertaking, he went abroad and built a magnificent Opera-House in London, where he gave brilliant performances during the season of 1911-1912.

It has been said of him that no man is so loved by his employées, and no impresario brought forth by the last generation has so mastered the intricate and difficult mazes of operatic direction. Rarely, if ever, is there an illness recorded at a Hammerstein representation, and never a change of opera. He thrives on worries that killed others.

Oscar Hammerstein announced his first sea-

son of Grand Opera on April 30, 1906. "I have set in motion," he said, "the great and intricate machinery for founding such gigantic and noble purposes." Grand Opera would be nothing without superlatives.

His company included the following singers: Soprani, — Madame Melba, Madame Gilibert-LeJeune, Madame Mazarin, Kate D'Arta, Madame Farnetti, and Luisa Tetrazzini. Mezzi, — Madame Bressler-Gianoli, and Madame Gay. Contralti, — Madame de Cisneros, and Madame Zaccari. Tenori, — Bonci, Bassi, Dalmores, Altschevsky. Baritoni, — Maurice Renaud, Sammarco, Ancona, Mendolfi. Bassi, — Edouard de Reszké, Braz and Maglinez. Buffi, Gilibert and Giandi.

Of Madame Melba much has been said in a former book. She has continued her wonderful career, but of late years has appeared more frequently as a concert than an opera singer.

At the end of the season of 1906-1907 a summary of the new singers of the season was published in the *Musician*, which is, with permission, reproduced here. Some of the singers have remained and built up great reputations, others have faded from the American opera-goer's vision, but the review is interesting as



showing the impression made by the singers during their first season.

“ Bonci has been hailed as a rival of Caruso, — not merely in the advertisements of his manager, — and it is maintained by many of his countrymen that he is the greater tenor of the two. But it is difficult to understand how the musically sophisticated can make any such claim. Bonci, although possessed of some right musical feeling, sings with a perpetual tremolo and with a dry, nasal and far from luscious tone; while Caruso’s voice, however ill-advised his manner of using it, is the very embodiment of Italian sunshine. The explanation of Bonci’s Italian popularity may lie in the tendency of his countrymen to look coldly upon those of their artists who accept the tempting dollars of foreign countries, and are, consequently, less heard in Italy.

“ Regina Pinkert, a Polish coloratura singer of European reputation, was more in the public eye — or perhaps one should say ear — than the other new singers at the Manhattan. She proved to be a thoroughly accustomed routine artist, capable of a well trained vocal agility, but suffers, like Bonci, though in a less degree, from the tremolo.



“ Pauline Donalda, a young Canadian singer who sang at Covent Garden, was, on the whole, the most pleasing of the new sopranos of the Manhattan Company. Her voice is light, fresh and agreeable, having, in certain tones, something of the quality of Sembrich's. With the exception of a few tight, incorrectly produced tones, her organ is excellently trained.

“ Two other Manhattan singers are Miss Russ and Regina Arta. R. Arta is an American who is said to have sung with success abroad. Neither of them were singers whose art or natural endowment call for admiring comment.

“ Madame Bressler-Gianoli, a French singer who appeared here a few years ago in the short-lived venture of a New Orleans company, made a success at the Manhattan. It was a success, however, rather of the theatre than of the Opera-House, for neither her voice nor her vocal art was of the first class.

“ Eleanor de Cisneros, another American girl, seems to have lost what voice she had, when, as Eleanor Broadfoot, she sang here with the Savage company six years ago, in spite of which fact she is said to have won laurels in Europe.

“ Dalmores has a young strong voice but is hardly yet a singer of distinction. M. Altschewsky sang with a large quantity of badly produced sound with dramatic intent. His method is hopelessly faulty. M. Renaud is an artist, though his voice during his short engagement here seemed to have lost much of its original beauty. Sammarco, a young baritone new to America this season, has a fine voice. Signor Arimondi (bass) is also a worthy artist. In spite of the pleasing qualities of some of the recruits to the ranks of the opera singers this season, we have heard no one who can in any way impair the lustre of such names as Melba, Sembrich, Gadski, Eames, and Schumann-Heink, or dim our memories of Jean de Reszké, Lilli Lehmann and Ternina, in their prime.”

Luisa Tetrazzini, announced by Hammerstein, is undoubtedly the greatest coloratura soprano of to-day. An excellent account of her and her art was written by Mr. Pitt Sanborn and published in several papers, in 1912:

“ The true history of a ‘ diva,’ could it ever be written, would make curious and engrossing reading. By ‘ diva ’ we do not mean any woman that has distinguished herself as a singer, but those goddesses of song who have been a



LUISA TETRAZZINI



caste apart since the days when Faustina and Cuzzoni made life miserable for the great Händel in London. The 'divas' are fewer than they used to be, the art of song has fallen on evil days, but one we have now, and we doubt whether any of the glorious line is more mysterious than Luisa Tetrazzini.

"A mystery Madame Tetrazzini is, and she will probably remain such. Nevertheless, a good deal has been written about her in this country, a good deal which has ignored even the facts that are obtainable, and much of it not without the suspicion of more or less prejudice. Madame Tetrazzini is not 'chic,' she is not a fashionable prima donna. Whether she is an intelligent and reflective artist, or whether she is just an imbecile singing by the grace of God alone, or what she is, those that write most about her are not in a position to know positively, for she is an Italian, and operatic Italians, with rare exceptions, are about as available for purposes of psychological observation as a skylark singing in high heaven. It has been necessary to study her art across the footlights.

"Luisa Tetrazzini has been quoted as saying that she taught herself to sing. Her voice and her trill she had from God, and she listened to



her oldest sister, Eva (now Mrs. Cleofonte Campanini). A few months of repertory (and her repertory is not the ten or the dozen parts she has sung in New York and London, but some thirty or forty), completed her preliminary studies. Such training is a contrast to the seven laborious years of the great tradition, and might account for the crudities in her singing, which were most evident the first night she sang here, and which have been harped on ever since, but does it account for her perfect attack, her wonderful control of breath, her clean execution of ornaments, her exquisite portamento, her proficiency in sustained singing, especially her ability to phrase with the roundness and incomparable grace of the pure old Italian style? Who shall ever know this?

“ Back in the nineties Tetrazzini appeared in Italy with success and was then heard in some of the Italian seasons at St. Petersburg. Those Italian seasons in coldest Russia have had distinguishing features. Singers like Sembrich and Battistini were members of the company; Caruso also, singing for the first time his robust rôles. Luisa Tetrazzini was then regarded as a highly promising young florid soprano, and she had a chance at the *Gildas* and *Lucias* when

Sembrich did not sing. When Sembrich did she sometimes appeared with her, as *Donna Elvira* to her *Zerlina*, as *Filina* to her *Mignon*. She is a pretty woman still, but then she was also slim, and nature made her a comedian. So when St. Petersburg first saw 'La Bohème' she, as a matter of course, 'created' *Musetta*, and how gloriously she must have sung the waltz. Then one fine day the young Italian singer took French leave and flitted off to Spanish America. She was successful at Buenos Ayres, but she vanished from that great city. The legend has it obscure hill towns heard her. She turned up again in Buenos Ayres, but at a minor theatre. Again the veil. Then one of those wandering Italian companies with pompous names that work up the long Pacific Coast found itself in San Francisco, and Tetrizzini was the star. San Franciscans acclaimed her a second Patti. This was before the earthquake had shaken them into New York and carried her fame to the East.

"Conried took note and placed her name on his list for the Metropolitan season of 1905-1906. It was said she would sing the page in 'The Masked Ball.' But she did not, nor anything else. San Francisco suffered earthquake and

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fire and Oscar Hammerstein once more determined to become an impresario. He announced Tetrazzini for his first Manhattan season. Again she came not. Some said the mountains of Mexico this time. In the autumn of 1907 she suddenly emerged at Covent Garden, and people that walked in darkest London saw a great light. Oscar Hammerstein lost no time. First he engaged her for the next season, then he decided he must have her at once, and he did. Despite the Conried threats of a previous contract she faced a New York audience on the Manhattan stage early the following January, and the rest is plain sailing.

“ What Tetrazzini was in Russia, what befell her in the South American hill towns, what in the jungles of Mexico, it is impossible for the present writer to say. Whether she had only high notes in Russia, whether the hill dwellers can only hear above the staff he knoweth not. But certain it is when she first sang at the Manhattan she was chiefly admirable for her extraordinary upper octave. In it the tones were perfectly produced, strong, pure, dazzling in their flame-like play of color. When she sang a thing like the ‘ Carnival of Venice ’ variations, her staccati, her chromatic runs, her echo

effects, her swelling and diminishing of a tone, the ravishing curve of her portamento showed a vocal virtuoso in that exalted region without a peer. The feats of Sembrich and Melba paled in comparison. But those inexplicable crudities and inequalities! A woman who in 'La Traviata' had just sung 'Ah! fors' é lui' surpassingly well could declaim 'Dite alla giovine' in a choked, metallic parlando that would not be tolerated in any respectable vocal studio. Some of the sounds she emitted in the lower portion of her voice were like nothing but the clicks of an old-fashioned talking machine before those devices had been perfected. However, Tetrizzini never sang here so badly as that first night.

"When she returned the next season the crudities had largely disappeared, and her medium register, previously deficient, she had recovered or developed. The return to vocal civilization, singing in London and New York under the guidance of Campanini and in competition with such singers as Melba and Sembrich, were doing their work. But the apotheosis of Tetrizzini came last spring when, after a year's absence, she returned here to sing in concert. Then the voice was almost perfectly equalized,



a glorious organ from top to bottom. Even in the lowest register she was ready with a firm, rich tone, as in 'Voi che sapete.' She not only sang great florid arias with perfect command of voice, technique and style; she sang *Aida's* 'Ritorna vincitor' as scarcely a dramatic soprano has sung it here; she sang Solveig's song from 'Peer Gynt' like a true Lieder singer, and the page's song from 'Figaro' she sang with an adorable and Mozartean simplicity. It was an astonishing and enchanting display of great soprano singing in every style, and the most wonderful display of sheer vocal virtuosity New York can have heard since the prime of Adelina Patti.

"Of course, when Tetrizzini came here, she provoked comparison at once with her seniors, Sembrich and Melba, the two great coloratura sopranos that have given the generation of New Yorkers that knew not Patti its standards. Melba is familiar to most local opera-goers since her début here in 1893; Sembrich, since her return after an absence of many years in 1897. Sembrich, the younger singer, who appeared here in the early eighties, must be left out of consideration. Melba had the evenest soprano voice throughout its liberal range that has been



heard here in our time. Her singing has always been called cold and with reason. The voice itself was full and rich, its flexibility extraordinary, her vocal utterance incomparably spontaneous and easy. And there is reason to suppose that Melba has not lacked temperament, but she never related it to her singing. That was a business which she discharged in a workmanlike manner, without enthusiasm, at the least cost to herself. At her best, there was a certain insolence in the easy way she spun her cantilena, a disdain as she tossed off floriture, but she never sang them as if they meant anything to her or had anything in particular to do with musical expression. Her phenomenal trill was just a trill, her scale of matched pearls just a scale. In their way they were perfectly beautiful, but it was the beauty of faultless machine work.

“ This singing never fell below a high level, but it never rose from the astonishing to the transporting. There was a lack of completeness in Melba’s singing — crudity is hardly the word for anything in a way so finished; she made little use of her great vocal means. She could sing in a wonderful full voice and in a wonderful half voice, but who ever heard her

pass from one to the other with the exquisite swelling or diminishing of tone that carries you away when Tetrizzini sings? One might stretch a point and say in her famous crescendo trill, but nowhere else. Her use of portamento was so sparing that her phrases generally seemed cut in lengths, not deliciously rounded and poised as by Sembrich and Tetrizzini. Any one who recalls her treatment of the word 'Salce' in the 'Willow Song' in Verdi's 'Otello' knows just where she fell short. She had the technique for great Italian singing, but never quite the style, quite the feeling. How cold her 'Caro Nome' left an audience that was worked up to cheers by Tetrizzini's!

"Melba sang accurately and with the dignity of good workmanship. Her singing was stereotyped, without the excitement of the unexpected, the suddenly improvised, the inspiration of the heat and joy of song. Sometimes, as Tetrizzini's harshest critics insist, that soprano injures the music by the variation she introduces; oftener she lifts it above the clouds. This sort of thing was inherent in the great Italian style as in the Italian temperament. Melba had neither. Melba's style was rather mid-century French, the style of

‘Faust’ and ‘Romeo et Juliette,’ than that of the older Italian rôles, though in many respects she sang those rôles so well and so delightfully.

“That art of Italian phrasing Sembrich possessed in its perfection. She was one of the singers who, as a certain musician of obviously Teutonic leanings once said of Marietta Alboni, could ‘by beauty of tone, perfect vocalization and grace of phrasing make a divine poem out of a phrase absolutely dripping with idiocy.’ But beautiful as her voice was, it was not quite a voice of the first order like the voice of Melba and Tetrazzini, and it was not physically capable of some of the coloratura feats theirs lent themselves to, at least since her return here in 1897. One must admit that there are and there have been greater coloratura singers than Marcella Sembrich. Her almost unique musicianship, her intelligent versatility, which made her at home in all styles of music except only the heavy dramatic, forbidden her by the lightness of her voice; the prevailing evenness of her singing, its warmth, its inspiration, made her for decades a singer peculiarly precious to all who love real singing, whether in the opera-house or the concert hall.

“ In the delivery of the older Italian cantilena Sembrich has been equalled in our day only by a very few singers, like Battistini, Bonci and Tetrazzini at her best. She was also a singer of brilliant bravura, as one who buckled on the armor of song and went forth joyously to the fray with sunlight glinting from every facet of her panoply. But in the exquisiteness that is still a master quality of her sustained singing, her coloratura lacked something. Tetrazzini, to all her brilliance, adds that exquisiteness, that ease and delicacy. Nor had Sembrich a trill to compare with the trills of Melba and Tetrazzini, and now and again, in ‘ The Magic Flute ’ and ‘ Lakme,’ for instance, she essayed here feats that only a perfectly fresh voice like Tetrazzini’s, with an unworn high staccato, can undertake with safety.

“ One is forced to conclude from some things that Tetrazzini has done during her present engagement at the Metropolitan, that there are still times when affected by nervousness or indisposition she allows some of the old crudities to crop out in her singing. By seizing on such moments and ruthlessly applying the microscope one can concoct a veritable Jeremiad about her. Yet nine times out of ten her sing-



ing is not only flawless, but so transporting in its warmth and beauty, that you forget the art of it in sheer delight. Her proficiency in coloratura is generally recognized, the largeness and purity of her high staccato, her extraordinary command of the trill, her wonderful chromatic runs, her knowledge of tradition and taste in ornamentation. But she is no less great as a singer of sustained song. 'It was not her coloratura that I admired the most,' said Victor Maurel after he heard her first, 'but her singing of some of the andantes.' Perfectly placed tones, the Italian roundness and grace of phrase (which she shares with Sembrich in contradistinction to Melba), a warm, vital, spontaneous delivery give her cantilena its magic. She has been charged with a tremolo. If she is guilty, we fear Sembrich must be held guilty too, and what shall be said of Gadski, Bonci, Clément, Amato, not to mention Renaud and Elena Gerhardt?

"Some dear people are shocked to death because her costuming is a thing *sui generis*. Often her inspirations in that respect are more amusing than the 'chic' creations of a Paquin. You don't see every singer with the semblance of a peacock stretched from her throat



to the tip of her train, or arrayed in the fauna and flora of the vasty deep. Many a woman irreproachably gowned, who sings like a peacock, might look to the clam and be wise. Tetrazzini has tripped out on the stage dispensing smiles and kisses like an overgrown soubrette, and then she has begun to sing: a dignity has insensibly molded her features, suffused her whole being, as if the god of song were finding utterance through her. Nor is it any part of the listener's enjoyment whether her singing is the result of the painful labor of years or whether she happened upon it like Keats on his poetry, Schubert on his music. Only Sembrich and Melba in our day have been worthy to be compared with her, and in some respects she is a greater singer than Sembrich, in some not, but in all, save sheer voice, a greater than Melba. One can afford to forget the quibbles and just be thankful that the Metropolitan stage, in days when real singing is all too seldom heard, boasts, if but for a few performances, one woman still in the prime of her voice who can sing like a vicar of song on earth."

When Tetrazzini appeared in Boston in March, 1909, the following criticism of her appeared in the *Herald*: "When she rises to her

greatest heights, either in sustained medodic phrases or in florid passages, her voice is her own, unlike other voices, and in some respects incomparable. Her tonal emission is delightfully free and spontaneous. Her phrasing is now and then chopped by a desire to take this or that long passage in one breath. Her upper notes are uncommonly brilliant, and at the same time liquid, for her brilliancy is never metallic. Her scales are unusually even, while her trill is not always of uniform excellence. She excels in the ease and abandon of her bravura, in her ability to swell and diminish a tone and then connect it with the first one of a new phrase, and in many other technical matters. Whatever she does is as though in a joyous mood."

In San Francisco, which city claims the honor of having "discovered" Tetrzzini, she has recently sung in an open air concert before many thousands of admiring auditors. She received a great ovation. Madame Tetrzzini is in private life Madame Bazelli.

Madame Regina Pinkert began her American career at the Metropolitan Opera-House on the first night of the season of 1906-1907, with comparatively little "advance notice." Madame Pinkert is a native of Warsaw, and grew up

with no intention of taking to the operatic stage. Her mother was fond of music but did everything in her power to keep from her daughter's mind the idea of a professional career.

Thus the young girl was allowed to study only piano at the Warsaw Conservatory, and at the age of fifteen she was ready for graduation. The professors, however, objected to awarding the diploma to any one so young, and they insisted on her remaining another year. During this year one of the professors tried her voice and pronounced it excellent, so he advised her to take singing during her last season at the conservatory. She did so, and in due time received her diploma as a pianist, and a gold medal, but, in the meantime, had become so interested in her vocal studies that she now made singing her chief study. In a short time she went to Berlin and placed herself under Madame Desirée Artôt. She made her début at La Scala in the "Barber of Seville," and remained there for several seasons. She sang all over Europe and made several professional trips to South America, besides which she sang three seasons at Covent Garden before coming to America.

Madame Pinkert is of medium height with

dark eyes, black hair, clear pale complexion. She is graceful on the stage and is full of animation. Some critics have said that she resembles Patti. Her voice blended well with that of Bonci, with whom she sang in several operas.

Pauline Donalda's father was a Russian, her mother a Pole. He translated his name of Lichtenstein into Lightstone and became a naturalized British subject. His daughter was born in Montreal where she attended English schools, finishing at McGill University. Connected with McGill is the Royal Victoria College of Music, which was given to the University by Lord Strathcona when he was Sir Donald Smith. The girls who attend this school are called "Donaldas" in honor of the founder, and this accounts for the stage name of Pauline Lightstone.

After completing her studies at Montreal Miss Donalda went to New York and sang for Salignac and for Dufriche, who were then at the Metropolitan. They urged her to go abroad, and she went to Paris where she studied for two years with Duvernoy, at the same time taking lessons in acting with Lhérie. She made her début at Nice in "Manon,"



and she is noted for her perfect French diction.

Oscar Hammerstein in telling of the superstitions and oddities of his singers, said that Pauline Donalda never went on the stage without tearing a button off her clothes, for luck. Tetrazzini's idea was to drop a dagger on to the stage three times. If it stuck upright it was a good omen, and she would sing well. But if not she would be disturbed and anxious all through the opera.

Madame Bressler-Gianoli was a native of Geneva. She was educated at the Paris Conservatory and made her operatic début in her native city at the age of nineteen in "Samson et Dalila." She sang in "Carmen" for the first time in 1895 and appeared occasionally in a Wagnerian rôle. In 1900 she was engaged at the Paris Opéra Comique.

Madame Gianoli first came to America in 1903 singing *Carmen* and other rôles with the New Orleans Opera Company. This company visited New York, but had no success and became stranded. Mme. Bressler-Gianoli sang scenes from "Orfeo" at a benefit performance for the company at the Metropolitan Opera-House. She did not return to America until Oscar Ham-



merstein engaged her for his first season, 1906-1907, at the Manhattan Opera-House. She made a sensational triumph as *Carmen* and her initial appearance in that rôle, on December 14, 1906, gave Mr. Hammerstein the first feather in his operatic cap. Her performances of this rôle were always distinguished by great dramatic as well as musical effectiveness and strong individuality. She was singing it on one occasion at the Manhattan Opera-House when she was wounded by Charles Dalmores, the *Don Jose*, the accident resulting from Mme. Gianoli's near-sightedness by which she was long troubled.

Mme. Bressler-Gianoli returned to the Manhattan Opera-House for Mr. Hammerstein's second season, but aside from *Carmen* sang no important rôles. Thereafter she returned to Geneva and remained until Andreas Dippel engaged her for the Metropolitan Company in 1910. She was not satisfied with the parts to which she was assigned at the Metropolitan Opera-House, however, and returned to Europe, singing at La Scala, Milan, in " *Carmen*," " *Samson et Dalila* " and " *La Favorita* " and appearing also in other cities. Failing eyesight forced her to relinquish her work and,

incidentally, to decline another offer from Mr. Dippel.

Mme. Bressler-Gianoli died at Geneva in May, 1912, after an operation for appendicitis. She had been engaged to return to opera in America in the season of 1913. She was survived by several children.

During the Grau régime at the Metropolitan Opera-House Madame Murio Celli secured an engagement for her pupil, Eleanor Broadfoot, who had just returned from her first operatic venture, a month's tour of Mexico. Miss Broadfoot was to appear in small rôles, but during the engagement she had an unexpected opportunity to show what she could do with larger parts. "Il Trovatore" was to be given in Philadelphia, with Madame Eames as *Leonora*. All the regular contraltos of the company were either ill or overworked. Miss Broadfoot was asked to sing, and was hurried on from New York to Philadelphia. There was no time for rehearsal, but she succeeded so well that Mr. Grau complimented her.

After two seasons with the Metropolitan Company she went abroad to Italy, to try and win a name. She married a young Cuban, Count de Cisneros, a journalist and artist, and



Photograph by — MATZENE — Chicago

ELEANORA DE CISNEROS AS ORTRUD IN "LOHENGRIN"



descendant of a very old family. When she arrived in Italy she found that the Italians were not ready to hear Eleanor Broadfoot, the American from the Metropolitan Opera-House, without some financial consideration. She therefore had her cards printed Eleanora de Cisneros, and was not only urged no more to pay for her engagements, but secured a contract at Turin, where she made her début as *Amneris* in "Aida." In addition to her successful career in America, where she has appeared at all the leading opera-houses, she has travelled in the antipodes, South America and in Europe, reaping many laurels. She is tall and of great personal beauty, beside possessing an unusually fine contralto voice. She has sung at Bayreuth in the Wagner opera festival, taking the part of *Brünnhilde* and *Brangaene*, but has also made her mark in French and Italian opera. One of her favorite rôles is that of *Delilah*, and it is reported that Madame Melba hearing her dissolved into tears and declared that she was the greatest *Delilah* in the world. Madame de Cisneros toured Australia in the Melba Opera Company.

Alessandro Bonci, the tenor who was brought by Hammerstein to rival Caruso, was born in



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1870 at Casena in the Romagna. He is said to have commenced singing as soon as he could talk.

At the age of twenty he entered the Rossini Conservatory of Music at Pesaro, where he studied under Pedrotti and Felice Coën, making such progress that in three years he was appointed to the position of solo tenor at the Church of Santa Maria in Loreto, where the choir consists of sixteen picked voices.

After six years of hard training Bonci was engaged to sing the tenor rôle in Verdi's "Falstaff" at the Royal Theatre in Parma, where the audiences are noted for their critical faculty. He was successful and was at once offered an opportunity to sing the title rôle in "Faust" at the Del Verne Theatre in Milan. From that he eventually went to La Scala, the Mecca of all opera singers, where he made such a success in "I Puritani" that his name soon became famous throughout Italy.

He made a tour including Florence, Naples, Palermo and so on to Warsaw, St. Petersburg, and all the great cities of Europe, and then to South America. He made a lasting impression in Paris by his wonderful singing in "Don Giovanni."

Bonci has gained high honors in Europe, for he has had conferred upon him by the King of Italy, the title of "Commendatore della Corona d'Italia," one of the highest orders given to illustrious Italians. He is "Singer of the Chamber" to the King of Spain and the Queen Mother, the King of Portugal, and the Archduchess of Austria. At King Edward VII's reception to ex-President Loubet of France, Bonci was the only opera singer invited to appear at his Majesty's concert.

On his engagement at the Manhattan Opera-House he was spoken of as insignificant in stature, devoid of histrionic sense, but dowered with one of the purest, most delicate, supple, and exquisitely modulated tenor voices of our time. After his first hearing he was recognized as the rival of Caruso, although the two singers excel in such entirely different phases of their art that the word rival seems absurd in this connection. The rivals were the Metropolitan and the Manhattan Opera-Houses.

Perhaps the most complete criticism of Bonci is that written by Mr. Parker, in the *Boston Transcript*, in April, 1908:

"The new tenor is pure voice and artistry themselves. He is small of stature and of

slight, but wholly unaffected presence. His acting is discreet operative convention and adroit ingenuity in the keeping of his histrionic and physical limitations unobtrusive. He handles them even with a certain grace and quiet that make them need no other veil but the charm and perfection of his singing. He is no heroic, dramatic, or romantic tenor. His voice is as light as his body, but is of an exquisite and enticing brightness, clearness, pliancy and smoothness. It is of purest tenor quality, and the most austere master might not plausibly quarrel with his use of it. He is a singer of delicate voice and perfectly mastered artistry.

“ Only Madame Sembrich, of the familiar singers on our stage, is to be compared with this tenor in knowledge of the art of song and in the practice of it. Its refinements, its graces, its subtleties are alike at his command. Mr. Bonci might be of the eighteenth century instead of the twentieth in his skill with the ornament of song. He is master of exquisitely sustained and ordered tone in flowing and songful passages. He can ‘ spin ’ his voice with a pliance that our generation has almost ceased to expect in singers of his sex. From his lowest to his



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ALESSANDRO BONCI





highest note his voice is of a smooth and flawless suavity. The brightness of his tone is almost crystalline, and the undulations that give it life are delicacy itself. His singing flows in perfectly rounded phrases, and he has the sense of pure song as a painter has the sense of fine color, or a writer the sense of the intrinsic beauty and power of words. He was born for such music as Mozart's. He has the scrupulous elegance of diction and the little graces and ardors of song that suit the music of Wilhelm Meister, and Puccini. The pleasure of Mr. Bonci is the pleasure of the beauty of a pure tenor voice that is an emotion in itself, and of an artistry that is fine intelligence and taste. Caruso's eulogists have said that his voice is golden. By the same comparison Bonci's is silvern."

At the opening of the season of 1906, when Bonci was being compared with Caruso, the following criticism appeared, and it seems to sum up the comparative virtues of the rivals, well and concisely:

"Those who are seeking the highest pleasures that may be found in the singing of men will probably go to hear Signor Caruso for sensuous charm of voice, and Signor Bonci for

exemplification of much finer artistic skill. In nearly all things which enter into the art of vocalization he is incomparably finer than his rival at the Metropolitan. His tones are impeccably pure, his command of breath perfect, his enunciation unrivalled by any singer now before the local public. His phrasing also, his sense of proportion, symmetry, repose — exquisite. The voice is a pure tenor with a tinge of that pallid quality from a love of which we have been weaned by the tenors who have won our favor since Campanini was with us, but it has a fine nobility in the highest register and in all its phases it is as completely under his command as are the keys of the pianoforte under the diabolically ingenious fingers of Rosenthal.”

Madame Bonci has known her husband since his earliest days at Loreto. He was singing then in the church choir, making daily pilgrimages to Parma to study with Felice Coën, who is responsible for the much praised singing of the little tenor. Madame Bonci's father was a dealer in religious books, pictures and symbols, and made a comfortable fortune. As soon as Bonci learned enough to go on the stage he became engaged to the daughter of the man who had already helped him to success.

The following incident of the operatic war waged between Conried and Hammerstein will be found amusing, inasmuch as it indicates the shrewdness of Hammerstein. — Once upon a time the Metropolitan management decided to engage Bonci, who was a member of the Manhattan Company. Bonci was approached, listened, and an agreement was reached. The news was announced with due flourish. Hammerstein had nothing to say at first, but when the report was well circulated he announced that he was most flattered to find that the Metropolitan people had to come to him for good artists, — he cited Campanini (the conductor), Dalmores, Bassi, and Sammarco, all of whom had been approached by representatives of the Metropolitan Company. He repeated that he was much flattered, and took the occasion to announce the engagement by him of the great Italian tenor Zenatello. Some time later he also announced that Signor Bonci was not free to make any engagement with the Metropolitan Company as he was bound to the Manhattan for two more seasons, unless he (Hammerstein) was willing to release the singer.

Eventually Bonci became a member of the Metropolitan Company, though not until Ham-

merstein had gone out of business, but in recent years he has not appeared so much in opera as in concerts in which he is unrivalled, and in which he is said to reap a far greater financial reward than in opera.

Ivan Altschevsky was one of Hammerstein's new tenors in the season of 1906-1907, and was described as one who sang with a large quantity of badly produced sound with dramatic intent, but with a hopelessly faulty method. He did not stay long in America, but some time later he is said to have lost his mind and to have been without resources.

Altschevsky was the son of wealthy parents and had been reared in luxury with the belief that he would inherit large property from his father. When the father died it was found that everything was spent and the property mortgaged. Young Altschevsky was thrown on his own resources. He took to singing, and was able to earn a living by his voice. When Hammerstein heard him he was singing in a café at Brussels. After returning to Europe he created the leading rôle in an opera called "Le Cobzar" and had surprised the audience by the unusual fervor of his singing and acting. After the performance it was found that he had lost



his reason completely. Schaliapine, the Russian basso, organized a benefit for him in Paris.

Maurice Renaud was born at Bordeaux in 1862. He studied at the Conservatoire in Paris and then under Gevaert and Dupont at Brussels. He made his first appearance at the Théâtre de la Monnaie, in Brussels, and remained there for ten years, making occasional visits elsewhere during his engagement. In 1896 Renaud went for a short time to the Opéra Comique in Paris, but was soon engaged for the Grand Opera-House.

Some years ago M. Renaud left the Opéra and became an independent singer.

Maurice Renaud is tall, lithe and vigorous, with a voice of full, rich baritone quality, capable of a wide and very adroitly modulated range of tonal color, from delicacy to power, from lyric smoothness to piercing poignancy. Always a singularly acute intelligence, a discerning imagination, and a minute and adroit artistry guide his singing. Every detail is polished and adjusted to its due place in the musical and emotional whole of the part or song. His singing and his characterization in opera seem to be the result of long and penetrating study and of adroit and subtle imagination.



His is indeed an artistry that lacks spontaneity and impulse. Sometimes, in fact, the results of calculation are too obvious in it, and it becomes unduly self-conscious and anxious. These occasional traits are rather the excess of his virtues, — of his varied natural gifts, his pliancy of temperament, his keenness of intelligence, his fineness of imagination, his fondness for reflection, and his liking for significant and individual detail. There is romance as well as reflection in his temperament.

The following criticism of Renaud's interpretation of the rôle of *Scarpia* and his comparison with that of Scotti will be most interesting: "The essential difference is the stress that Renaud lays on the cruelty of *Scarpia*. Scotti, a hard, unscrupulous, passionate man, who can be cruel as he can be almost anything else that is evil, when occasion and disposition prompt. To Renaud's *Scarpia* cruelty has become a second nature and essential pleasure. He is cruel for the perverse sensual pleasure of cruelty. Renaud's *Scarpia* suggests a man of far more acute mind than Scotti's."

Maurice Renaud has been called the "Edwin Booth" of the operatic stage. Among his most famous impersonations are *Mefistofele* in



MAURICE RENAUD



Boito's opera of the same name, *Rigoletto* in Verdi's opera, and the monk *Athanael* in Massenet's "Thais."

When Heinrich Conried succeeded Maurice Grau at the Metropolitan Opera-House he found in his desk a contract which would have bound Renaud to that theatre for a number of years, but, being ignorant of operatic affairs and of those pertaining to the French stage in particular, he had never heard of Renaud, and let the contract go by default. Oscar Hammerstein, better informed, sought Renaud and kept him as one of the chief ornaments of his company, as long as he continued to manage the Manhattan Opera-House.

One of the leading critics wrote of him in 1910: "His distinction is an artistry of the intellect and the imagination as well as of song and histrionic action, an artistry that is essentially subtle, that exacts like qualities in those that understand and admire, and that thus remains intrinsically an artistry for connoisseurs. . . . There are as many Renauds as the actor has characters. . . . He is a singer by dint of intelligence and knowledge as well as by grace of voice and labor. . . . He is in possession of an exalted speech that often is more poignant

and vivid than the spoken word." In short, Mr. Renaud is a remarkably talented actor, and, as in the case of Mary Garden, the audience is fascinated by the character presented, and forgets the mere voice.

In 1912 M. Renaud expressed some views on stage management, in an interview with a representative of *Musical America*, which are worthy of the perusal of all opera lovers. Extracts from the interview are as follows:

"We have lost sight of the function of opera to-day; we have neglected to consider the ideal it should fulfill. The historical and the poetic drama have practically disappeared from our stage. It is to opera, therefore, that the most imaginative and poetic figures, the gods and the goddesses and mighty heroes must seek their refuge if they wish to live on. Is it not, therefore, most necessary to give this art the careful tending and cultivation that it requires and that we decidedly owe it? I am not accusing any operatic institution in particular, nor do my remarks apply to America solely, for one finds many miserably bad representations in Europe.

"In respect of *mise-en-scène* and often costuming, opera to-day has not advanced beyond



the time of Louis XIV," he declares. "What crudities, what ridiculous effects of anachronism! The painted skies in visible sections, the stiff and ungainly *coulisses* at the side of the scenes — all with which the theatre has long since dispensed — what business have they in opera to-day? How little is done to modify and ameliorate flagrant operatic absurdities, how little the art of the stage manager appears to concern itself with softening and toning down the weaknesses of situations and the fatuity of incidents!

"The individual artist himself can improve matters only in so far as he is assisted by the stage managers and his own colleagues. In Paris I appeared in Saint-Saëns's 'Henry VIII.' In the first act there is a long aria, 'Qui donc commande?' Now it is useless and ineffectual always to deliver an aria or a cavatina standing in the conventional posture and going through its full length as unconcernedly as though it were nothing more than a mere song, quite unrelated to the surroundings. So in Saint-Saëns's opera I sang almost the whole first part of this number seated and only moved about later. But to produce analogous effects through the rest of the opera it is necessary that the other

participants should evince more than the usual imagination.

“ Consider the first act of ‘ Romeo et Juliette.’ What have we on the stage? A crowd of guests at a festival and an old man. What happens? The old lord exclaims, ‘ *Livrons-nous à la danse!* ’ — ‘ Let us dance! ’ Does it not seem the most natural thing in the world that several couples should rise, begin to dance and then be followed in turn by others? But instead of that we see these guests and courtiers quietly remaining inactive while from the back appears a corps of ballet performers dressed in costumes entirely different, which goes through a series of evolutions and then withdraws. Is there any excuse for such foolishness?

“ Consider again ‘ Carmen,’ in which I am in a few days to appear as the Spanish bull-fighter. In the second act *Escamillo* has been invited to drink with a crowd of his friends. The throng appears singing his praises, forms in a double line and then he enters alone, the last of all, drinks and tells his comrades, all of them Spaniards, mind you, the story of a bull-fight. Sheer absurdity, ridiculous in the highest degree! My idea for improving the episode would be to make this individual enter either

first of all or, better still, in the midst of the crowd of his admirers and perhaps carried on their shoulders, since such a cordial welcome is supposed to await him. And then an effective touch might be added, if, as he came in, his arms were filled with flowers to scatter among the women. That the honored guest should make his appearance after all the rest have entered the inn passes comprehension. But what would you? If managements are not disposed to effect this reform what can the lone singer do?

“ We see performances of ‘ Rigoletto ’ in which the *Duke* and others wear the costumes of an epoch one or two centuries later than the period of action. Nothing is done, no one complains. The public, you say, is not any the wiser and does not appreciate the anachronism. That may be. But if the public does not know it, it seems to me that the journalists should. Accuracy, sense and logic are surely necessary in the staging of an opera. Perfect management can make even such a work as ‘ La Favorita ’ acceptable to-day. As for the Wagner dramas I can only say that I always prefer to hear the tetralogy in concert form than otherwise. The ideal pictures of its characters which exist in

our imaginations are created by the music and destroyed by what the stage shows us. Think of *Wotan* as he stands upon the rocks in the 'Walküre.' We have been led by the music to look for a figure as grand and as mighty as an archangel. The conception is never realized. I feel in such a case as I should if I saw some great piece of literature, with personages of which I had formed a vivid mental picture, translated into life through the medium of the stage. I need scarcely say that I would never desire to witness the dramatization of any book which I hold dear."

Charles Dalmores was regarded as one of the most distinguished tenors now living. His reputation is widespread, for he has excited admiration in Bayreuth, Vienna, Paris and most of the chief cities of Europe. His voice is a noble organ, manly, tender, and always sympathetic. He sings with great skill and always as a musician, and he is an accomplished and impressive actor. He became a member of the Manhattan Company in its first season.

An excellent biography of him, given by himself, appeared in the *Etude*, the editor of which journal has kindly given permission for its reproduction in these pages:



“ I was born at Nancy on the 31st of December, 1871. I gave evidences of having musical talent and my musical instruction commenced at the age of six years. I studied first at the Conservatory at Nancy, intending to make a specialty of the violin. Then I had the misfortune of breaking my arm. It was decided thereafter that I had better study the French horn. This I did with much success and attribute my control of the breath at this day very largely to my elementary struggles with that most difficult of instruments. At the age of fourteen I played the second horn at Nancy. Finally, I went, with a purse made up by some citizens of my home town, to enter the great Conservatory at Paris. There I studied very hard and succeeded in winning my goal in the way of receiving the first prize for playing the French horn.

“ For a time I played under Colonne, and between the ages of seventeen and twenty-three in Paris I played with the Lamoureux Orchestra. All this time I had my heart set upon becoming a singer and paid particular attention to all of the wonderful orchestral works we rehearsed. The very mention of the fact that I desired to become a singer was met with huge



ridicule by my friends, who evidently thought that it was a form of fanaticism. For a time I studied the 'cello and managed to acquire a very creditable technic upon that instrument.

“ Notwithstanding the success I met with the two instruments I was confronted with the fact that I had before me the life of a poor musician. My salary was low, and there were few, if any, opportunities to increase it outside of my regular work with the orchestra. I was told that I had great talent, but this never had the effect of swelling my pocketbook. In my military service I played in the band of an infantry regiment, and when I told my companions that I aspired to be a great singer some day they greeted my declaration with howls of laughter, and pointed out the fact that I was already along in years and had an established profession.

“ At the sedate age of twenty-three I was surprised to find myself appointed Professor of French Horn at the Conservatory of Lyons. Lyons is the second city of France from the standpoint of population. It is a busy manufacturing centre, but is rich in architectural, natural and historical interest, and the position had its advantages, although it was away from

the great French centre, Paris. The opera at Nancy was exceedingly good, and I had an opportunity to go often. Singing and the opera was my life. My father had been manager at Nancy and I had made my first acquaintance with the stage as one of the boys in 'Carmen.'

"I have omitted to say that at Paris I tried to enter the classes for singing. My voice was apparently liked, but I was refused admission upon the basis that I was too good a musician to waste my time in becoming an inferior singer. Goodness gracious! Where is musicianship needed more than in the case of the singer? This amused me, and I resolved to bide my time. I played in opera orchestras whenever I had a chance, and thus became acquainted with the famous rôles. One eye was on the music and the other was on the stage. During the rests I dreamt of the time when I might become a singer like those over the foot-lights.

"Where there is a will there is usually a way. I taught solfeggio in the Lyons Conservatory as well as French horn. I devised all sorts of 'home-made' exercises to improve my voice as I thought best. Some may have done me good, others probably were injurious. I lis-

tened to singers and tried to get points from them. Gradually I was unconsciously paving the way for the great opportunity of my life. It came in the form of an experienced teacher, Dauphin, who had been a basso for ten years at the leading theatre of Belgium, fourteen years in London, and later director at Geneva and Lyons. He also received the appointment of Professor at the Lyons Conservatory.

“ One day Dauphin heard me singing and inquired who I was. Then he came in the room and said to me, ‘ How much do you get here for teaching and playing? ’ I replied, proudly, ‘ Six thousand francs a year.’ He said, ‘ You shall study with me and some day you shall earn as much as six thousand francs a month.’ Dauphin, bless his soul, was wrong. I now earn six thousand francs every night I sing instead of every month.

“ I could hardly believe that the opportunity I had waited for so long had come. Dauphin had me come to his house and there he told me that my success in singing would depend quite as much upon my own industry as upon his instruction. Thus one professor in the conservatory taught another in the art he had long sought to master. Notwithstanding Dauphin’s

confidence in me, all of the other professors thought that I was doing a perfectly insane thing, and did all in their power to prevent me from going to what they thought was my ruin.

“ Nevertheless, I determined to show them that they were all mistaken. During the first winter I studied no less than six operas, at the same time taking various exercises to improve my voice. During the second winter I mastered one opera every month, and at the same time did all my regular work — studying in my spare hours. At the end of my course I passed the customary examination, received the least possible distinction from my colleagues who were still convinced that I was pursuing a course that would end in complete failure.

“ This brought home the truth that if I was to get ahead at all I would have to depend entirely upon myself. The outlook was certainly not propitious. Nevertheless I studied by myself incessantly and disregarded the remarks of my pessimistic advisers. I sang in a church and also sang in a synagogue to keep up my income. All the time I had to put up with the sarcasm of my colleagues who seemed to think, like many others, that the calling of the singer was one demanding little musicianship, and tried to



make me see that in giving up the French horn and my conservatory professorship I would be abandoning a dignified career for that of a species of musician who at that time was not supposed to demand any special musical training. Could not a shoemaker or a blacksmith take a few lessons and become a great singer? I, however, determined to become a different kind of a singer. I believed that there was a place for the singer with a thorough musical training, and while I kept up my vocal work amid the rain of irony and derogatory remarks from my mistaken colleagues I did not fail to keep up my interest in the deeper musical studies. I had a feeling that the more good music I knew the better would be my work in opera. I wish that all singers could see this. Many singers live in a little world all of their own. They know the music of the footlights, but there their experience ends. Every symphony I have played has been molded into my life experience in such a way that it cannot help being reflected in my work.

“ Finally the time came for my *début* in 1899. It was a most serious occasion for me for the rest of my career as a singer depended upon it. It was in Rouen, and my fee was to be



fifteen hundred francs a month. I thought that that would make me the richest man in the world. It was the custom of the town for the captain of the police to come before the audience at the end and inquire whether the audience approved of the artists' singing or whether their vocal efforts were unsatisfactory. This was to be determined by a public demonstration. When the captain held up the sign 'Approved' I felt as though the greatest moment in my life had arrived. I had worked so long and so hard for success, and had been obliged to laugh down so much scorn that you can imagine my feelings. Suddenly a great volume of applause came from the house and I knew in a second what my future should be.

"Then it was that I realized that I was only a little way along my journey. I wanted to be the foremost French tenor of my time. I knew that success in France alone, while gratifying, would be limited, so I set out to conquer new worlds."

Vittorio Arimondi was the leading basso of the Manhattan Opera-House in 1907. Arimondi was born in Saluzzo (Turin). He began his vocal studies under Cima, and for several years spent his time in grounding himself

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thoroughly for his career. His official début was made at Varesi in the opera "Guarany" by Gomez. This engagement was followed by others and soon he was invited to sing at La Scala in some trial performances, the result of which was that he was engaged for four seasons, under satisfactory conditions. Then he sang three seasons at the Costanzi in Rome, and three at the Têatro Fenice in Venice. His fame spread and he went to St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Berlin. After his first appearance he was engaged regularly each season to appear in those cities.

At Prague, Arimondi is said to have sung eighteen times and created the greatest sensation ever produced by a basso. After filling engagements in many cities of South America and the West Indies Arimondi secured an appearance at Covent Garden in London and sang there each season for six years. His first appearance in America was made at the Metropolitan Opera-House during the régime of Abbey and Grau.

Madame Arimondi was an excellent singer with a mezzo-soprano voice. She was known under her maiden name of Aurelie Kitzer.

In 1908 Arimondi celebrated the twenty-fifth

anniversary of his first appearance in opera. In 1883 he presented himself before Verdi, the composer, as a candidate for a part in "Falstaff." Verdi heard him sing and offered him the part of *Pistol*.

Abramo Didur was spoken of as a famous Polish basso who has come to the Manhattan Opera-House. When he appeared in "Rheingold" at La Scala a critic wrote of him, "Rarely has been heard at La Scala a voice as magnificent as that of Didur, an authentic basso cantante. Full of color, plastic, a true voice of *Wotan*." Didur was educated musically at the Conservatory in St. Petersburg. He made his début at Lemberg and was then engaged for the Imperial opera at Warsaw, after which he sang several seasons at La Scala, in Milan.

In criticizing Mr. Hammerstein's first season of opera Mr. Finck wrote: "Had the pace set on the opening night been kept up, Mr. Hammerstein would have found his opera-house as profitable as the cigar-making machine which enables him to indulge in such experiments. Of course it could not be kept up. Curiosity filled the house the first night; merit alone could fill it subsequently, and merit is not

always rewarded as promptly as it should be.

“ For a week it seemed as if the Manhattan Opera-House would be chiefly a Bonci opera-house. The audience was large when he sang, — small when he did not sing. It was a war of tenors, — Bonci *versus* Caruso. But gradually the criticisms in the newspapers convinced the public that there were other good singers in Hammerstein’s company, and that the performances were actually better on the nights when he did not happen to sing. Still there were not as many hearers as there should have been for the admirable performances given of ‘ Faust,’ ‘ Carmen,’ and particularly ‘ Aida.’

“ In none of these operas were the casts at all comparable to those that have often been heard at the Metropolitan Opera-House, yet the *ensemble* was so excellent that the general impression was astonishingly good. For this result Mr. Campanini was chiefly responsible, — Cleofonte Campanini, brother of the famous tenor who used to enrapture American audiences. It is no exaggeration to say that the conductor has aroused as much enthusiasm as the tenor used to. So marvellous is his gen-

eralship, so absolutely is every factor in the complicated operatic *ensemble* under his control, that the average opera goer feels the spell, the magic of his personality, and applauds for him as he does for Bonci and the other vocal favorites.

“ . . . Madame Melba was not a member of the Hammerstein company the first month of its career. In the meantime the female contingent was undeniably weak. Madame Pinkert proved herself an excellent coloratura singer but in sustained melody she has been less satisfactory. None of the other women singers quite proved herself of what is known in New York as the ‘Metropolitan standard;’ nevertheless, some good impersonations have been given by Bressler-Gianoli, De Cisneros, Russ.

“ Much stronger is the list of tenors, baritones, and basses. Bonci has not made such a sensation as it was expected he would, as the rival of Caruso. His voice lacks the volume, the luscious quality, the spontaneity of utterance that characterize Caruso’s; his strength lies in his style—his artistic phrasing, his skill in *filare la voce*, his good taste. In a word he is a first-class singer with a voice not quite first-class. His colleague, Bassi, has a better



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voice and sings well, too. Indeed, the company is exceptionally well supplied with good tenors, Dalmores and Altchefsky being real artists, too. The baritone Renaud gets as much as Bonci, and fully deserves it; he is a wonderfully picturesque *Don Giovanni* and *Rigoletto*. Ancona and Arimondi also must have honorable mention."

Mr. Joseph Sohn, reviewing the season in the *Forum*, admirably summarized the achievements of Mr. Hammerstein in the following paragraph:

"Mr. Hammerstein has truly ushered in an operatic New Year, if not a new era in operatic annals. For New York has never before in its history had so fine an *ensemble*, such finished performances of Italian opera, as have been given at the new opera-house in Thirty-fourth Street.

"New York had long been prone to think that there was a dearth of good singers abroad: Mr. Hammerstein has brought over a whole shipful of them. He has introduced several conductors whom it would be difficult to duplicate. He has presented an orchestra drilled to a nicety, and ever in absolute accord with singers and chorus. He has produced a chorus,

not consisting of lay figures, but of wide-awake men and women, who not only sing admirably together, but whose grouping on the stage is natural, life-like, and vivid to the last degree. He has been at pains to present scenery and costumes which are never incongruous, but generally appropriate and pleasing; and, instead of presenting a few 'stars,' surrounded by a most disappointing aggregate of satellites, he has given us an agreeable variety of excellent singers of the principal rôles, as well as uniformly competent interpreters of minor parts. . . . Our Manhattan opera, if continued along the lines followed this season, should receive the unstinted support of every true music-lover in New York City."

During the early part of Hammerstein's second season, on November 30, 1907, Mr. Lawrence Gilman published an excellent article on the opening of the second season at the Manhattan Opera-House, from which we are permitted to quote the following paragraph:

"Mr. Hammerstein's season, it cannot be too vigorously emphasized, deserves the attention of all those who realize the significant part which can be taken in the musical activities of a community by an operatic institution which is

vital and alive and untrammelled in all its parts; which is not dominated by traditions that have ceased to be valid, or by inordinate and obstructive personal influences. It is an altogether singular fact, a fact to be appreciated and to be celebrated, that Mr. Hammerstein has determined to produce, and is actually producing, new works of interest and importance; that he is not depending for his appeal upon a stale and de-vitalized repertoire, or upon the attraction of a few voices: this is what one means by the assertion that the Manhattan Opera-House is alive and vital in all its parts. If the actual performances were far less excellent and praiseworthy than they are, the influence of the house as an institution would still be stimulating and profitable, and its activities a source of benefit to operatic art in its best estate. When it is reflected that Mr. Hammerstein is actually preparing to produce half a dozen new operas that have never been heard in America — works of the calibre of Debussy's 'Pelléas et Mélisande,' Charpentier's 'Louise,' Massenet's 'Jongleur de Notre Dame' and 'Thaïs,' some idea of the scope and value of the work that is being undertaken at the Manhattan Opera-House will be

appreciated. And let it be remarked, as a circumstance the import of which needs no emphasis, that Mr. Hammerstein is undertaking the production of at least one of these new operas, Debussy's 'Pelléas et Mélisande,' with a full realization of the fact that he is extremely unlikely to find any commercial profit in the venture. Debussy's lyric drama will not, in all probability, make a wide popular appeal, for it is rare and subtle and strange to a degree; but the work is of extraordinary artistic importance, and it is realized by Mr. Hammerstein that its presentation, for the first time in America, will redound to his credit in ways that are permanent and valuable."

During Hammerstein's first season he wisely confined himself to giving performances of operas which were old favorites, and relying upon his chorus and orchestra, as much as upon his soloists to give as nearly as possible a perfect production. During the second season, however, he produced four new operas, i. e., Charpentier's "Louise," Massenet's "Thaïs," Debussy's "Pelléas et Mélisande," and Offenbach's "Les Contes d'Hoffman." This latter had, however, been given by an opera bouffe company at the Fifth Avenue Theatre in 1882,

under Maurice Grau, so that it was a revival, rather than a new production. That Hammerstein showed good judgment is seen by the fact that these four operas have been given many performances. “*Pelléas et Mélisande*,” a modern lyric drama, has been given many times under varying circumstances, and has caused more discussion of an æsthetic nature than any opera of the present day.

Mr. Hammerstein replenished his staff of singers judiciously. He engaged Madame Nordica, who had broken with the Metropolitan Opera-House, and he brought over from Paris a singing actress of remarkable ability, — Mary Garden. His new tenor was Zenatello, and an excellent contralto, Madame Gerville-Réache. All these singers have become distinct favorites.

No singer has appeared in America who has caused more diversified comment than Mary Garden. No singer has given the American public more food for thought. No singer has proved to be a more complete artist.

Miss Garden’s own account of her early career is given thus: — She began to learn the violin at the age of six, and when twelve years old she played at a concert. Now she wanted to play the piano, and began to study that in-



strument, and practised five hours a day. When she was sixteen she took part in an amateur performance of " Trial by Jury " in Chicago, where she was then living, and she developed a desire to learn singing. She worked hard for two years with Mrs. Duff, but longed to go to Paris. An opportunity came when she was nineteen, and she went for a year or two, without any definite plans. She knew no French, but lived where she had to speak French and in six months was able to read her first book in that language, and in a year she could converse quite well.

She began investigating teachers. One said he could put her on the operatic stage in twenty-six weeks. She thought it over and decided that this was too short a time. She eventually heard Trabadello and began to take lessons with him. She continued for a year and then went to Chevalier, remaining with him until she made her début at the Opéra Comique, in 1900, through the help of Sybil Sanderson. On this occasion she went on quite unexpectedly in the third act of " Louise," and pleased the audience.

Miss Garden never took a lesson in acting in her life. When she has a new rôle she thinks it

all out. And she seldom plays any part twice in exactly the same manner.

She is an American of Scottish descent, and made her artistic reputation practically in one city — Paris — at the Opéra Comique, although she occasionally appeared elsewhere, as for instance Brussels and London. She was content in Paris and made no effort to return to America until Oscar Hammerstein found her, when she was willing to come, with the prestige of an already notable career.

Miss Garden's is a singular and penetrating personality on the stage. She invariably suggests her operatic character, sometimes with large and vivid illusion, but oftener with an exceeding felicity and finesse. She can bear her part as an accomplished operatic actress in the intricate and exotic ways of modern music-drama as Parisian composers and librettists write it — while her singing is less a pure art in itself than a means to a more suggestive and poignant dramatic expression. She is accustomed to a theatre small in its audience room, where very close intimacy between singer and listener is possible, and where every delicate suggestion, and every stroke of finesse, may go home, and where the charm or power of the per-



Photograph by — MATZENE — Chicago

MARY GARDEN AS *SALOME*



sonality passes the footlights and penetrates those beyond.

Miss Garden seems inevitably to regard her singing as primarily a suggestive and idealized speech. Her voice in itself is not remarkable for compass, body, or quality. The connoisseurs may readily find flaws in the technical artistry of her singing. Hers is not the voice for the full-blooded coloratura of *Violetta's* music. Rather the virtue of her singing is her ability to shape and color the significant and haunting phrase, to thread her way through an iridescent web of them, such as Debussy's music for *Mélisande*, and to give each a characteristic and persuasive shimmer and edge. In all her parts her singing abounds in subtle, shaded felicities. At moments her singing is like a new and strange speech — as new and strange as Debussy's music. The listener feels the captivating fascination and the penetrating suggestion, and leaves the tests of cold technical blood until the spell has passed.

It took time for Americans to understand her, and at the first American performance of "Thaïs," although she received practically no applause, it was nevertheless felt that she had made a distinct success.



It would not be possible in the limited space of this book to quote extensively from the criticisms of Miss Garden's impersonations, but in order to show the diversity of opinion let us quote three reviews of her interpretation of *Carmen*, which has been considered one of her least popular characters:

(1) — “ From the moment of her first entrance the artist invested *Carmen* with every physical charm and allurements which tradition demands of the rôle, but she also succeeded in making the perennially fascinating cigarette girl of Merimée something more than merely an unreasoning creature of passion and pleasure. The Garden view of *Carmen* presented a woman elementally intense in her feelings and yet sufficiently mistress of herself to enjoy her triumphs over men for the sake of the sense of power such experiences give her. She studied her victims even while she herself fell under the spell of her passions, and with her, complete mastery of the one possessed seemed synonymous with satiety. Miss Garden conceived her *Carmen* as a decided fatalist, for in the famous card-song the dread omen of death seemed to interest rather than to frighten her, and at the end of the opera *Don José* and his

knife aroused her to scornful laughter and haughty unbelief until he made the fatal lunge, and she realized that her power over him was not sufficient to outweigh his jealousy. Then, even in her death agony, *Carmen* looked her surprise, and without any trace of terror died bravely — and gracefully.

“ Coquetting appeared to be as the breath of life to *Carmen*, and she sounded the keynote to her character as early as her first entrance, when she flirted with every man who came near her, and went to those who did not. The soldiers who captured her were honored lavishly with *Carmen*’s glances and smiles, *Zuniga* basked complacently in the light of her irresistible invitations, and *Escamillo*, who looked maddened beasts in the eye, quailed before the all-conquering orbs of the Sevillian wanton. While *Carmen*, even in the readings of other artists, always had used those same personages for her machinations, it remained for Mary Garden to insist that the girl was not a slave to money or to passion, and she made clear her theory in every phase of her delineation. It was an absorbingly interesting character study and the audience followed it with the keenest sympathy.”

(2) — “ Miss Garden made a serious and in some respects successful attempt to sing the music. She must have astonished many of her hearers by the fidelity of her intonation in many passages, but in many others her quality of tone was not only harsh but even distressing. According to Miss Garden, *Carmen* was not so much a gypsy as a termagant of the streets of Seville. It seemed to be her idea that men of the types of *Don José* and *Escamillo* could be overcome by the most vulgar animalism. There was no poetry, no subtlety, none of that indescribable magnetism that one finds in the original character. Rude vigor, boisterous action, and something that looked like an undying pique animated her. It has been well said that some artists mistake temper for temperament. It was the former and not the latter which fitted the scowling eyes and moved the writhing form of this quite unseemly *Carmen*. Richard III remarked, ‘ Was ever woman in this humor wooed? ’ He did not mean it in this way, but *Don José* might properly have asked himself the question and answered it, ‘ Not by me.’ ”

(3) — “ Miss Garden’s performance was remarkable in many ways. It was original with-

out being extravagant, thoughtfully conceived and yet apparently spontaneous; characterized by a wealth of ingenious detail that was not ex-crescent ornamentation, but as a constant and natural revelation of character. In her effort to present her own conception of *Carmen*, Miss Garden did not find it necessary to do violence to Bizet's music or to appear as a strange and unfamiliar figure.

“ We saw *Carmen* as we fancy her from reading the story and the libretto; not necessarily as other women of talent have portrayed her, for there may be reasonable differences of opinion concerning the precise manner in which *Carmen* should act in the scenes provided for her by the librettists. We saw a *Carmen* that was not modelled on that of another, and yet was the woman whose loves never lasted over six months — *Escamillo* thus flattered her, for six weeks or six days were enough for the satisfaction of her caprices.

“ This *Carmen* was sensual, stony-hearted, as one subject to the passion that ‘ hardens a’ within, and petrifies the feeling.’ The ruin of this man and the death of that one were indifferent to her. A fatalist, she was not a coward. She knew her power over men. Officer, soldier,



bull-fighter in turn pleased her vanity and satisfied her longing.

“ Miss Garden’s *Carmen* was not a tough girl of the tobacco factory, not a gutter snipe, not a vulgar rowdy. The smugglers knew her shrewdness and her power and she queened it over them. She could assume a baleful repose, and never was she so dangerous as when she was mute. She was not noisy, chattering, shrewish. When she gave way to her temper, she was ready to kill.

“ This character was brought before us in flesh and blood. Miss Garden accomplished this by the modulation and the coloring of the voice, by uncommonly effective facial expression and by significant gestures. All these worked together with the utmost naturalness and with irresistible effect. Miss Garden did not find it necessary to act like a spoiled child or to be aggressively vulgar. Even in her sensual appeal to *Don José* there was the indefinable something that saved the scene from the grossness of ill-considered realism.”

Miss Garden, in an interview, gave a word of advice to girls departing to Paris: “ Do not talk too much about your plans for the future. Do not be insistent upon that *début* at the Paris



Opera, — or even any operatic début. Go over there quietly, study and discover for what you are best fitted. If it is opera, and you work earnestly for that career, be sure that your opportunity will come. No real talent was ever allowed to languish neglected and unseen.”

But she stirred up a long discussion by some very pertinent remarks which she made in an interview with the representative of one of the daily papers. The paragraph which caused the discussion is this:

“To-day if you go on the French stage you have got to have something besides a voice. You must have a personality. A mere voice bores them in Paris, and it is getting to be the same way in America, where people don’t like to hear a voice coming out of an expressionless face.”

Miss Garden had said that in her early days she had been assured that “if she could provide the voice and the personality” as an equipment for the operatic stage the matters of education and training could be taken care of. The editor of the *Evening Sun* commented upon her remarks at some length. He said:

“The ideal prima donna is no longer considered a demi-goddess, to be hailed as a prod-

igy of nature and accepted devoutly as a *diva*, but is regarded critically as a finished product of many processes, whose raw material is a precious voice combined with its perfect setting of an exactly poised personality, physical and spiritual, unalloyed with any detracting capacity for human emotions. Love, hate, pride, despair — all such dross is burnt out of the liquid treasure in the crucible of training.”

Then came the arguments as to “What is personality?” A writer in the *Musical Courier* sums it up in the following paragraph:

“It may be in some degree illuminating (since there is no hope of rounding up the definition of it in a word) to think that this ‘personality,’ for an artist, consists in a profound understanding of one’s art, of one’s life and nature in relation to it, and in the bringing of one’s every resource — physical and spiritual — to bear upon it, the term spiritual being intended to include the emotional capacity, whether in its crude state in the temperamental artist or in its clarified state in the artist who employs it sympathetically to artistic purpose.

“Personality is, therefore, fundamentally *understanding*, for one cannot use either his physical or his spiritual nature to purpose

without understanding. And if one is not gifted with spontaneous understanding the pathway to it is long and hard. Yet it is the true path, and the lyrical artist who does not make it his chief pursuit, but depends upon emotional display or mere voice, leaves behind all hope of becoming a great artist."

An excellent article was published by Mr. Arthur Farwell in *Musical America*, but its length prohibits quotation here. The subject is one which is closely connected with the modern view of operatic art, and we would advise our readers to look up Mr. Farwell's article.

It must not be forgotten that Miss Garden has given wonderful impersonations of such characters as *Marguerite*, *Grisélidis*, and *Mé-lisande*, and that her reputation does not depend upon characters of another type, such as *Salome*, *Thaïs*, *Sappho*, and *Louise*, though the sensational press has devoted more attention to her performance of such characters than to those of a higher type. The great merit of Miss Garden's art is that she has never been content with merely the externals of a character, but has made a deep psychological study of the nature of each personage that she represents. She does not regard her rôles

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merely as singing parts, but believes that each character should be delineated with as much care and attention to detail as the character in the spoken drama. She has constantly pointed out in interviews that acting has been too much neglected in opera, and that she has striven to establish a standard which shall regard the histrionics of an opera as of more importance than the singing.

Jeanne Gerville-Réache was born in the south of France. Her father was colonial governor of Guadeloupe. She studied singing in Paris with Rosina Laborde and Criticos, but the wishes of her family delayed her first appearance in opera, which finally took place at the Opéra Comique on December 20, 1899, when she sang the rôle of *Orpheus* in Gluck's opera.

She next created the part of *Catharine* in Erlanger's "Juif Polonaise," in April, 1900, and the part of *Geneviève* in Debussy's "Pelléas et Mélisande" in April, 1902. She sang at la Monnaie in Brussels in 1904 and at Covent Garden in 1905, and came to America as a member of the Manhattan Company in the fall of 1907, making her American début as the *Blind Mother* in "La Gioconda" on Novem-





Photograph by — MATZENE — Chicago  
JEANNE GERVILLE - RÉACHE AS *FRICKA* IN "DIE WALKÜRE"





ber 4. She appeared with great success also as *Dalila*, *Carmen*, the *Queen* in "Pelléas et Mélisande," and *Anita* in "La Navarraise." Her voice is particularly warm, luscious and southern, her face and figure striking and she has much dramatic force.

Madame Gerville-Réache in private life is Mrs. George C. Rembrand.

A critic in Philadelphia, after a performance of "Samson et Delilah," declared that Madame Gerville-Réache was the greatest contralto since Alboni. He praised "her velvety voice, her magnetism, personal beauty and charm, her ability as an actress and the remarkable tone effects she produces with her beautiful organ."

It was due to Emma Calvé that Madame Gerville-Réache went on the stage. When she was sixteen years of age one of her friends induced Calvé to hear her sing, and Calvé embraced her and said that she must go on the stage, and that with such a voice it would be a crime if she were prevented. So her studies were pursued under M. Criticos, a Greek residing in Paris, who had also been a teacher of Jean de Reszké. She was coached in the "Prophet" and "Orfeo" by Madame Viardot-Garcia, and

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as *Dalila* she was coached by the composer, Camille Saint-Saëns. In this part she made a tremendous sensation in Brussels and Paris, which she duplicated later in America.

As one critic remarked: "It was all up with poor Samson when Delilah appeared."

The following excellent review of Madame Gerville-Réache's impersonation of *Dalila* was written by Mr. Philip Hale, when the opera was given in Boston in March, 1910:

"Mme. Gerville-Réache took the part of *Dalila* last night for the first time in Boston. She was heard here as a member of Mr. Hammerstein's company in April, 1909, and her reading of the letter in 'Pelléas et Mélisande,' her brilliant *Amneris*, and her intensely dramatic *Anita* in 'La Navarraise' are well remembered. When 'Tristan und Isolde' was performed here recently she took the part of *Brangaene* in two representations, but the music was not well suited to her voice.

"In the course of the years certain impersonations stand out in bold relief—as Jean de Reszké's *Romeo*, Milka Ternina's *Isolde*, De Lucia's *Canio*, the *Carmen* of the earlier Calvé, the *Iago* of Victor Maurel. This list might easily be extended, and the *Dalila* of

Mme. Gerville-Réache should surely be included.

“ Grave and learned divines have speculated concerning the character of the woman of Sorek and arrived at entertaining conclusions.

“ It is not necessary, however, to dilate on the psychology of the character in discussing Mme. Gerville-Réache’s impersonation. When a woman takes the part of *Helen* of Troy, *Cleopatra*, *Dalila*, or any other noble dame of antiquity whose face or personal fascination played havoc with men, it is only reasonable to ask that the temptation be at least intelligible to the spectators. Last night the weakness of *Samson* was not without excuse, for Mme. Gerville-Réache was a seductive apparition.

“ Saint-Saëns’s music displayed her voice in its sumptuous beauty. The lower and middle tones of his voice are peculiarly full and rich, and although the extreme upper tones are not so inherently beautiful and not so freely emitted, the singer used them skilfully for dramatic purposes. It is an unusual voice, the voice of Eustacia Vye, and seldom are tones of such truly contralto quality now heard on the operatic stage. The voice alone should have led *Samson* astray.

“ But Mme. Gerville-Réache also acted the part with much more than ordinary skill. Her facial expression, her gestures and attitudes, her nuances of sensuous enticement, her intensity of passion, together with the spell of her voice, made her impersonation irresistible. And this performance was free from extravagance, nor in the scene of seduction did she become inartistically sensual.”

Young American women are always anxious to find the sure road to success, and the representative of *Musical America* asked Madame Gerville-Réache to give some advice to operatic aspirants. Although the history of recent years does not indicate any lack of American prima donnas, the comments of the great singer will be of value to aspirants for operatic honors, and permission has been given to quote the article.

“ Silly pride, or rather what a lot of silly girls call pride, is responsible for the scarcity of native prima donnas in this country,” said Mme. Gerville-Réache, the famous contralto, in Chicago, the other day.

“ No sooner does a young woman find she can sing a scale than she sets her mind on becoming an opera singer. This is a pardonable



ambition; what is unpardonable, however, is the 'proud' attitude the young person begins to assume toward all other lines of musical endeavor. She simply ignores them all, studies for several years, learns three or four parts, and then calls on one of the worthies who have operatic rôles to distribute. She may have a splendid voice, she may know the rôles so well that she could sing them backwards, and yet she cannot secure a position. She cannot make a début in this country. Injustice? Not at all. What would she be good for?

"It would take two years of constant rehearsing to fit her for her first appearance and then, let me tell you, there is a vast difference between even a dress rehearsal and a public performance. An opera-house is not a training school. Training schools never trained anybody anyhow. You must learn to do things by doing them. The girl who is not wealthy enough to go to Europe and buy several appearances at some of the microscopic opera-houses one finds in almost every German and Italian city should begin at the lowest rung of the ladder.

"She should sing in the chorus of a musical comedy company, then be promoted to a regu-

lar singing part. Later on she should spend a year or so in the chorus of a regular opera company. By that time she would have familiarized herself with almost every phase of life on the stage, with the various stage conventions, with the orchestra, with the audience. She would have learned to be prepared for any emergency.

“ Furthermore, she would have been self-supporting all the time and she would have acquired a knowledge of real life. Unfortunately, the majority of young women conceal their laziness under the mark of pride. Chorus singing being too much like work, they affect to despise it. Singing in musical comedy is work, too, arduous work. Therefore, they shun it. It's too low for girls from ‘good families.’ And then, slowly but surely they go to seed, some begging in ladylike fashion from patrons of art, some teaching, some falling back on their family for support. And all the while America is borrowing from Europe singers who weren't too proud once to get a training and who now capture all the big fees. There are just as many good voices here as in Europe, but the fatal pride of too many young women allows most of that good material to go to waste.”

Giovanni Zenatello was brought to America by Oscar Hammerstein in 1907, and made his first bow to American audiences at the Manhattan Opera-House as *Rhadames* in "Aida." He was then regarded as a tenor with a voice of great beauty, power and of fine virility,—"a true tenor rising in the upper register to a delicate beauty that is delightful. He has agreeable stage presence, but the exuberance of acting and delivery might well be toned down. It would be idle to compare Zenatello and Bonci or Caruso. He is more robust than Bonci and undoubtedly more capable of singing a wider range of parts. The manly quality of his singing is most pleasant and it is certain that he will have a fine measure of success."

Since that time Zenatello has gained in every branch of his art, and is now considered one of the finest operatic tenors before the public in America. At the close of the Manhattan Opera-House he became a member of the Chicago Opera Company. He also married Maria Gay after a romantic courtship of four years.

Zenatello is a man of humble origin, with an absorbing love for music, so that he began his studies while earning his living in other ways, and although offered help when his prospects

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became known, he preferred to win fame by his own efforts, and finally secured a début at the San Carlo Theatre in Naples.

One of his favorite rôles is that of *Pinkerton* in "Madame Butterfly," a part which he created on the production of that opera at Brescia in June, 1904. The work did not find favor with the Italians and was withdrawn. Puccini then set to work to revise it, and on its reproduction at La Scala, when the work proved to be a great success, Zenatello was again the *Pinkerton*.

Giovanni Zenatello is a native of Verona. He is short, well-proportioned and fair. When he first studied singing he was taught as a baritone, but he could not find an engagement because his voice sounded small. At last, in 1898, he succeeded in getting a contract as baritone with a small company at Naples. He sang with this company for a month but was not satisfied with the result of his training, and was quietly working on tenor rôles. One night, when the opera to be given was "Pagliacci," the regular tenor was taken ill and the manager was at his wits' end, when Zenatello volunteered, and sang the part in fine style. For two years he continued to sing with small companies until he had saved up some money, and





Photograph by J. Williams, Boston

GIOVANNI ZENATELLO AS *LOEWE* IN "GERMANIA"





then he went to Milan and sought an engagement as a tenor. Now he was successful, and secured a début at La Scala, after which his career was established.

Zenatello's success at Covent Garden was what led to his engagement in New York, for Madame Melba was singing at Covent Garden at the same time and was so delighted with his work that she urged Hammerstein to secure him. Hammerstein acted on her advice and cabled an offer to him.

Zenatello's *Otello* is admirable. He lacks physical bulk, — his Moor is tall, spare, quick of glance and alert of elastic movement. His voice has penetrating intensity. By every token of physical aspect this *Otello* has the sensitive and tense passions that such a frame often encloses.

Mario Sammarco is one of those singers who were drawn into the profession in spite of adverse home influences. When he was a boy he was infatuated with singing and with the theatre, and sometimes used to run away from home with his companions to go to the marionette shows which are to be seen in all Italian towns. His father urged him to devote himself to non-musical studies, which he did, and had

very little time for his vocal work. However, he was determined to become a singer, and joined a choral class at Palermo. The director noticing what a passion he had for singing gave him some private lessons, although without much faith in his future, saying that his voice was too small to justify his thinking of singing in a theatre. Later on the teacher admitted that he might perhaps be able to sing small parts.

It was not until he took the part of *Valentine* in an amateur performance of "Faust," given by some of his friends, that Sammarco's father relented. Several people who were present said that he should study for the stage and the father gave in. Sammarco now went to Cantelli, a singer who had toured with Carlotta Patti, and presently made his début in "Le Villi," an early opera of Puccini's.

On his appearance in America the following review was published: "The début of Sammarco makes claim for serious attention. Sammarco is an Italian baritone of great renown in Italy, and a favorite at Covent Garden. He sang the prologue to 'Pagliacci' in a way that brought the audience to its feet,—his greeting was the longest and loudest that has befallen any new artist here for years. He is

an exquisite artist in the use of his vocal powers. He achieves dramatic effects without shouting, and is an actor of no mean ability."

At the close of the Manhattan Opera-House Sammarco became a member of the Chicago-Philadelphia company.

Oscar Hammerstein had the gift of discovering that which would create the strongest impression. He decided to produce "*Pelléas et Mélisande*," an opera composed by Debussy, to the libretto of Maurice Maeterlinck. This work was first produced in Paris in 1902, and it took four years to establish it in the repertoire of the Opéra Comique, for at first it was anything but a success, and the people used to whistle and cry out during the performance. The balconies and the galleries, so Miss Garden related, were the first to catch the spirit of the opera.

One writer declared that Debussy had achieved the perfect fusion of the arts of music, of the drama, and of the theatre, which is the goal and ideal of the opera in our time.

A writer in a New York paper, after hearing the opera in 1911, said: "It would be impossible to conceive a finer vehicle of expression than that invented by Debussy through the simple, yet original process of abolishing rhythm,

melody and tonality from music, and thus leaving nothing but atmosphere. *Membranous* music is the most fitting expression of the character of *Mélisande*. Yet it is one of Mary Garden's greatest parts. Her individual method finds itself in most felicitous consonance with the music of Debussy. She, too, long ago, revised dramatic singing by the process of eliminating from it rhythm, melody and tonality, and thus in 'Pelléas et Mélisande' arrives at artistic territory which she had spied out even before Debussy had claimed it as his own. . . . But there is not a minute when Mary Garden as *Mélisande* is not beautiful, — when her pose, gesture and facial expression are not perfect in their dramatic expression."

Debussy, in discussing his music, is said to have remarked: "I have been reproached because in my score the melodic phrase is always in the orchestra, never in the voice. I tried with all my strength and with all my sincerity to identify my music with the poetical essence of the drama. I wished, intended in fact, that the action should never be arrested, that it should be continuous, uninterrupted. I wished to dispense with parasitic musical phrases. When listening to an opera the spectator is wont to



experience two kinds of emotions which are quite distinct, the musical emotion on one hand, — the emotion of the character on the other. Generally they are felt successively. I have tried to blend these two emotions and make them simultaneous. Melody is, if I may say so, almost anti-lyric, and powerless to express the constant change of emotion or life. Melody is suitable only for the song, which confirms a fixed sentiment. I have never been willing that my music should hinder, through technical exigency the changes of sentiment and passion felt by my characters. They should have perfect liberty in their gestures as in their cries, in their joy as in their sorrow.”

When the production of this opera was announced at the Manhattan Opera-House it was said by intelligent observers who had heard the work in Paris, and who had many opportunities of seeing and judging the artistic calibre of the New York public, that “ *Pelléas et Mélisande* ” would strike over their heads, and that many listeners would be bored. The result was quite the contrary, — a large and brilliant audience followed the work with interest and at the conclusion of the fourth act there was a sincere demonstration of approval.

Oscar Hammerstein was brought before the curtain and made a characteristic little speech: "If the sublime poetry and music of this work meet with approval it places this city at the head of any city in the world in its musical appreciation. As for me, my only object in producing it was to endear myself to you and perpetuate myself in your memories."

"The work is the most exotic ever attempted here on the operatic stage," wrote another reviewer after the performance. "It is not an opera, not a music drama. It has no 'tunes;' it has only a few phrases, that might really be taken to be 'motifs.' There is little about the music that is consecutive, little flowing musical speech. And after all has been recorded that is *not* in this music there still remains to be told what is chiefly in it and upon what the whole fabric rests, namely — mood."

The work was produced in February, 1908, with almost the same cast which had sung it in Paris. — Mary Garden as *Mélisande*, Jean Perier as *Pelléas*, Hector Dufranne as *Golaud*, Mlle. Sigrist as *Yniold*, Madame Gerville-Réache as *Genevieve*. Arimondi as *Arkel* and Crabbe as *Le Médècin* were not in the Parisian cast.

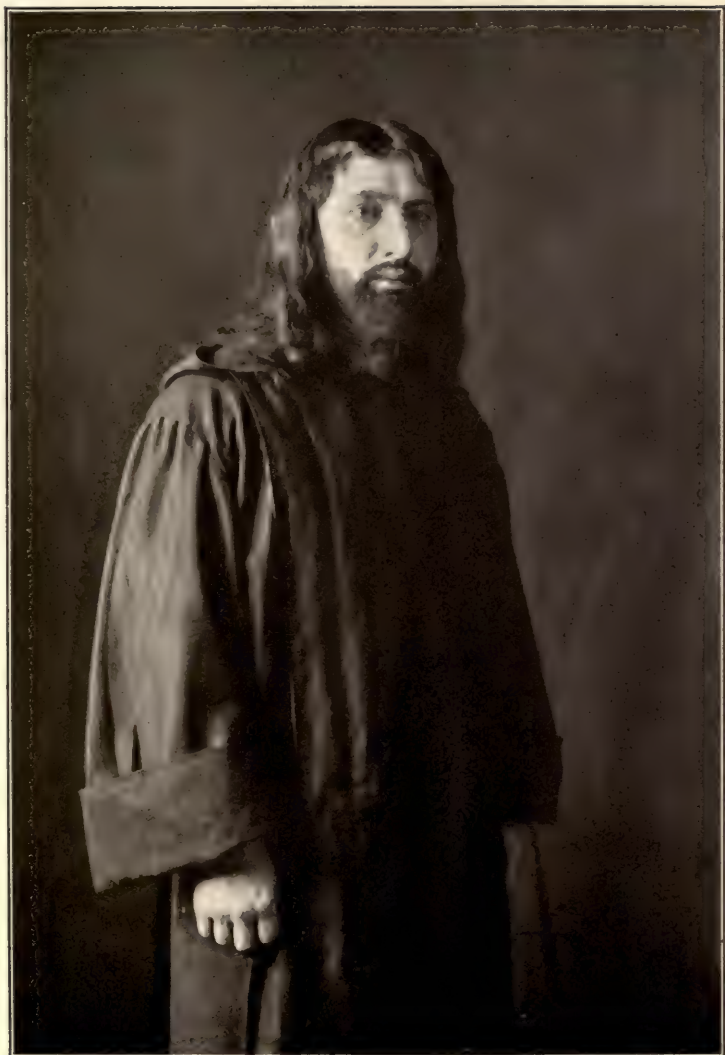
In view of the interest caused by the extraordinary musical work the following description of the composer may be in place here. It was made by a writer in the *Boston Transcript*: "I met Debussy, and was struck by the unique ugliness of the man. His face is flat, his eyes prominent, — the expression veiled and sombre, — and, altogether, with his long hair, unkempt beard, uncouth clothing, and soft hat, he looked more like a Croat or Hun than a Gaul. But there is talent in the man's face, unique talent. His high cheek bones lend a Mongolian aspect to his face. The head is brachycephalic, the hair black. The man is in his music."

Jean Alexis Perier, whose impersonation of *Pelléas* was considered by many critics to be inimitable, was born in 1869 in Paris. After studying at the Conservatoire, he gained first prize for singing in 1892, and first prize for opera comique. He sang at the Menus-Pyasis, the Folies-Dramatiques, and the Bouffe-Parisiens until, in 1900, he became a member of the Opéra Comique. His voice has little sensuous charm, nor is his tonal delivery flawless, but his diction is dramatic and he is an excellent actor.

Hector Dufranne was born in Belgium and

made his début at the La Monnaie as *Valentine* in "Faust." He filled an engagement at Covent Garden and was then made a member of the Opéra Comique in Paris, where he created the rôle of the *Father* in "Louise." Later he appeared successfully as *Golaud* in "Pelléas et Mélisande." Dufranne has been regarded as the possessor of the best voice coming from France since Pol Plançon. He is also a most excellent actor.

In reviewing the third season of the Manhattan Opera-House, in *Harper's Weekly*, Mr. Lawrence Gilman wrote: "Mr. Oscar Hammerstein continues in his favorite pastime of compassing the impossible. He has just brought to a successful conclusion his third season of opera in New York. For the third time, that is to say, he has confounded disinterested skeptics and interested opponents by giving opera to the manifest satisfaction of his public, without material support beyond that supplied by himself, and in the face of an opposition of the most formidable character—an opposition to which for three years it has been confidently predicted that he would succumb. This deponent is not informed as to whether Mr. Hammerstein, by reason of these activities, is richer



Photograph by — MATZENE — Chicago

HECTOR DUFRANNE AS *ATHANAEL* IN "THAIS"





or poorer, or whether his financial condition remains unaltered. The point of importance is that he is, as Mr. James would say, still 'in the game;' and that he has, on the whole, kept faith with his public. He has given, during the twenty weeks of the season just past, performances of opera which have at least equalled in interest and excellence those of the far more resourceful institution which is his rival; and he has, for the most part, made good his promises and fulfilled the expectations which he aroused.

"The production of 'Salome' was brilliant, impressive, memorable — one of the most effective that Mr. Hammerstein has accomplished; the performances of 'Tosca' have not, in certain respects, been equalled in New York; those of 'Othello' and 'Samson et Dalila' were both admirable.

"Certain other performances, of familiar works, remain pleurably in the memory by virtue either of effectiveness of ensemble or brilliancy of individual impersonation — as that of 'La Bohème,' with Melba, Gilibert, Zenatello, Sammarco, and De Seguro; 'Rigoletto,' with Mr. Renaud as the tragic *Jester*; 'Louise,' because of the personations of Miss

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Garden, Mr. Gilibert, Mr. Dalmores; 'Les Contes d'Hoffmann,' because of the marked effectiveness of the performance as a whole.

"Of individual achievements none has been more remarkable than that of Miss Garden. To impersonate, even acceptably, such extremely diverse characters as *Mélisande*, *Salome*, *Louise*, *Jean the Juggler*, would be sufficiently noteworthy; yet in each of these rôles Miss Garden was far more than acceptable: she was always eloquent and often inimitable. The unfaltering accuracy with which she differentiated these types and exposed their characteristics was beyond praise. This lyric actress has definitely established herself as one of the most powerful and subtle histrions now on the stage. Her dramatic instinct is unerring, her skill is extraordinary. The *Mélisande* which she has now exhibited during two seasons is an interpretation of exquisite and touching veracity — one of the most perfect things that the modern theatre can show; but her *Salome*, her *Thaïs*, her *Louise*, are scarcely less successful. Miss Garden has been the most brilliant adornment of the Manhattan's season, as, indeed, she was of the one which preceded it. It is pleasant to see that Mr. Hammerstein apparently appre-

ciates his possession of this astonishing artist.

“ In conclusion, it may be said that the Manhattan’s third season has been, if less stimulating and memorable than its predecessor, rich in interest. The quality of its proceedings has been of a well-sustained excellence, and they have had the indispensable element of vitality.”

During his third season, 1908-1909, Mr. Hammerstein relied still more upon new productions than upon great singers, though he had a good assortment of singers. In his announcement for the season Hammerstein promised a large number of new operas, according to the habit of the impresario, and during the season he fulfilled more than the average amount of promises. The total record of the season was as follows: In French — “ Salome ” (10 performances), “ Thaïs ” (7), “ Le Jongleur de Notre Dame ” (7), “ Les Contes d’Hoffmann ” (7), “ Samson et Dalila ” (6), “ Louise ” (5), “ Pelléas et Mélisande ” (4), “ Princesse d’Auberge ” (3), “ Carmen ” (2), “ La Navarraise ” (1). In Italian — “ Lucia ” (7) “ Otello ” (6), “ Tosca ” (5), “ Cavalleria Rusticana ” (5), “ I Pagliacci ” (5), “ Rigoletto ” (5), “ La Traviata ” (5), “ La Bo-

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heme " (5), " Il Barbieri " (3), " Crispino e la Comare " (3), " La Sonnambula " (3), " Les Huguenots " (2), " Aida " (2), " I Puritani " (2), " Il Trovatore " (1). There was also one performance of the prologue to Boito's " Mefistoféle," one of the carnival scene from " Princesse d'Auberge," two of the pantomime " La Chair," and three of the pantomime " La Mort de Cléopâtre."

Of these Massenet's " Jongleur de Notre Dame " and Blockx's " Princess d'Auberge " were absolutely new to New York, but the productions of " Salome " with Mary Garden in the title rôle, of " Otello," " Tosca " and " Samson et Dalila," in which latter Madame Gerville-Réache excelled, were considered superior to any representations of these operas that had been seen in this country. Moreover, Salome had apparently become part of the customary diet of the New York opera goer.

Of the singers Mary Garden showed wonderful versatility and power, distinguishing herself in such diverse rôles as *Mélisande*, *Salome*, *Louise*, *Jean the Juggler*, *Thaïs*. Madame Melba was at the Manhattan Opera-House for a brief season of two weeks. Madame Tetrazzini appeared frequently in the



coloratura rôles. M. Renaud justified his reputation as a singing actor.

The new singers of the season were Madame Labia, Madame Mariska Aldrich, Madame Doria, Signor Sammarco, an excellent baritone, Hector Dufranne and Vieulle.

Maria Labia first appeared in America in the season of 1908-1909 as a member of the Manhattan Company. She is a member of an old Venetian family, one of her ancestors, it is said, was a member of the celebrated "Council of Ten," whose methods are revealed by Lord Byron in "The Doge of Venice."

Her father lost his fortune and died, leaving his widow with three daughters to educate and start in life. The oldest became a dramatic soprano, married and retired. The second became a violinist, and the third, Maria, entered upon an operatic career.

It is related that Maria's grandmother was an excellent singer, and knew all the florid music of her day, having learned from some of the most celebrated masters who flourished about the middle of the nineteenth century. She taught her daughter, who was a contralto and who married early, and sang only in private. She, however, was able to impart her

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knowledge to her children, as above related.

Maria appeared first in concert, singing in Milan, and then in Russia. At the age of eighteen she accepted an invitation to go to Stockholm and sing in a season of Italian opera, after she had finished her concert tour in Russia. She sang *Mimi*, *Nedda*, *Santuzza* and *Marguerite*, but she soon realized that her voice was developing into a dramatic, rather than a lyric soprano.

She now went to Berlin, learning German and studying the parts of *Tosca*, *Carmen* and *Marta* in "Tiefland," which latter rôle she created and sang eighty times.

On her first American appearance the following criticism is one of the most reliable: "Madame Labia not only has youthfulness (she was said to be only twenty-three) and loveliness of form and feature to commend her,—she has also youthfulness and loveliness of voice, and a splendid complement of dramatic talent. Her facial expressions, her movements, her poses all publish a vitality which make one harmony with her exuberant vocal expression. There is splendid metal, clear and ringing, in her voice, and it is sur-

charged with emotion. In quality, especially in the upper register, it frequently brings reminders of the youthful Calvé, but its utterance is more untrammelled, more spontaneous."

In these latter days all successful singers are induced to express opinions on some subject of general interest, and Miss Labia was attacked on the subject of matrimony, as regards professional singers. She declared that "no woman can be a great artist, and a good wife and mother at the same time. If she attempts it she will either neglect her home for the sake of art, or will sacrifice her art to good house-keeping." There is doubtless much truth in this assertion, and yet we can point to several excellent singers who are admirable mothers. We are not in a position to express any opinion as to their housekeeping ability.

Madame Labia was considered excellent as *Tosca*, and worthy of much admiration in other parts. She was the most astisfactory among the women singers who were new during the season of 1909-1910, at the Manhattan Opera-House.

Madame Mariska Aldrich is an American and was born in Boston. She married J. Frank Aldrich, formerly representative in Congress

from Illinois, and studied in Paris with Alfred Giraudet for two years before making her début. While in Paris she met and was heard by Oscar Hammerstein, who engaged her for the Manhattan Opera-House on a contract for five years, to alternate between his New York and Philadelphia houses. She was to take the place of Madame de Cisneros, who had gone to Europe, and she made her début at the Manhattan Opera-House, in 1908, in "Samson et Dalila."

She is a woman of much personal charm and was compared with Madame de Cisneros. She was tall and more slender than de Cisneros. Her features and coloring were perfect and she had a charm of manner that amounted to magnetism.

Madame Aldrich began her serious study with Madame Cappiani, the well-known teacher of New York, and with Vianesi. Then she studied with Randegger and Darewski in London, who prophesied an operatic future for her.

Her maiden name was Mariska de Norvath, and she at first intended to make her début in Paris under that name, but when Mr. Hammerstein engaged her she decided to appear in her native land under her married name.

Madame Aldrich is the mother of several children and in this respect has been compared with Madame Schumann-Heink.

She declared that she would not sing Wagner until she was thirty years of age. Madame Aldrich sings in six languages and speaks five.

Notwithstanding the "five years' contract" with Hammerstein, Madame Aldrich appeared in 1909 as a member of the Metropolitan Company.

Augusta Doria is the stage name of Augusta Klous, a Boston girl, who made her first American appearance in grand opera in Philadelphia in November, 1908. In her younger days Miss Klous lived in the South End of Boston, and developed the great ambition to be an opera singer. She tried for a church position but was nervous and could not sing well at sight, moreover, she had then taken but few lessons in singing. But she had a voice of deep contralto of extraordinary richness and beauty.

Presently she secured an engagement in light opera, and joined the "Prince Pro Tem" company, which was playing at the Boston Museum. This was in 1893. After some time she managed to get to Berlin where she became a pupil of Julius Hess. She returned to Bos-



ton in 1894 and gave a concert at Chickering Hall, when the critics praised her voice and advised further study, — study for opera. Needing more money she joined the “Parlor Match” company, managed by Evans and Hoey, and towards the end of 1895 she was able to go to Vannucini in Florence. Here again she met with some obstacles, of which not the least was poor health.

Miss Klous now proceeded to London and sang at various social affairs, but soon turned up in Paris, where she studied with Bax until his death, — then with Verquet, the famous tenor. At last her opportunity came and she made her début at Monte Carlo, as *Emilia* in “Otello.”

She now became a pupil of Madame Marchesi, and soon Carré engaged her for the Opéra Comique, but she never sang there. Instead she accepted an engagement at the Monnaie, in Brussels, and appeared on November 20, 1900, as *Brangaene* in “Tristan und Isolde.”

In 1902 she was a member of the opera company at Rouen, and created a rôle in a posthumous opera of Godard’s entitled “Les Guelfes.” She also sang a season at Antwerp.

Miss Klous married a Belgian, and became

known as Madame Doria. In 1908 she joined Oscar Hammerstein's forces at the Manhattan Opera-House and made her American début in Philadelphia as *Delilah*. She met with instantaneous success, her voice, skill, beauty and histrionic ability being quickly recognized and warmly praised. Her first appearance in New York was on December 16 of the same year, as *Nicklausse* in "Les Contes d'Hoffmann." She also sang *Emilia* in "Otello" with Melba, Zenatello, and Sammarco.

During her engagement at the Manhattan Opera-House she sang in "Aida," "Il Trovatore," "Tannhäuser," "Hérodiade" and other operas. At the conclusion of her engagement she returned to Europe, and filled long engagements in Italy and St. Petersburg, and in March, 1912, she made a success in Paris, at the Municipal Theatre of La Gaité, in the leading rôle in "La Favorita," her interpretation of this part being called a true musical treat. She also sang "Hérodiade" in Paris and was complimented by the composer of that opera.

In 1909 Mr. Hammerstein gave a preliminary season of opera at popular prices, meeting with fair artistic success but with a financial deficit estimated at \$50,000. During this season Mar-

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guerite Sylva made her first appearance on September 1, in "Carmen," and on September 9, Eva Grippon, a French dramatic soprano, and Paul Duffault, a French tenor, made their American début.

On November the 4th the regular season commenced with the first performance in America of Massenet's "Hérodiade," which was well staged and proved to be one of the great successes of the year.

Massenet's "Sapho" was given for the first time in this country on November 17, 1909, with Mary Garden, Trentini, Alvarez, Lackin, and Dufranne. Massenet's "Griselda" was also given its American première with Mary Garden in the principal part.

On November 26 "Tosca" was given, introducing Carmen Melis to the American public.

But the greatest operatic event of the season was the production of Richard Strauss's opera "Elektra," with Madame Mazarin as *Elektra*, and Madame Gerville-Réache as *Clytemnestra* (she was afterwards replaced by Madame Doria). Madame Mazarin is a French dramatic soprano, a great tragedienne and singer, and she held the audience spellbound.

Towards the end of the season "Lakmé"

was given with Madame Tetrizzini in the title rôle.

Thirty operas were given, — eighteen French, nine Italian, three German, — one hundred and seventeen performances.

In the year 1908 there loomed upon the operatic horizon another work by Richard Strauss, said to be more nauseating than "Salome." This was "Elektra," a modern version by Hugo von Hoffmannsthal of an old Greek tragedy. Before it was performed in Dresden Oscar Hammerstein announced that he had received from Richard Strauss the exclusive rights to his opera "Elektra" in the United States, and a date was fixed for the first performance in January, 1910. This had to be deferred and the production actually took place on February the first of that year.

There was much interest exhibited in the production of "Elektra." A correspondent in Dresden wrote in regard to the libretto and music: "A wave of uncompromising sensuality has spread over German literature in recent years; its expression is most pronounced, as it is most easily distinguishable, in the products of the stage. . . . This tendency in all its unmitigated unhealthiness seems to have taken

firm hold of Richard Strauss. In its extreme, undisciplined expression it probably appeals most strongly to his special talent for finding the most frequent expression for violent, lurid effects. . . . If the orchestral apparatus was unprecedently ambitious in 'Salome,' it has not grown less so for 'Elektra.' A body of instrumentalists that can hardly be placed in even our largest theatres, have tasks set them which rival in difficulty only those of the soloists on the stage. In the matter of the exacting quality of the new music all previous standards must be set aside. The seemingly impossible has been accomplished, — 'Salome' has been outdone. . . . Incontestable, at first blush, is the stupendous cleverness in devising new and surprising tone effects, and further an inventiveness that piles Pelion on Ossa, climax on climax, to such an extent that ere we have reached the culminating scene one's powers of receptivity are fairly exhausted. The final picture, where *Elektra* in an ecstasy of gloating vengeance prances about the stage with hideous maniac contortions, is assuredly as abhorrent a picture of all that is disgusting as can be imagined."

In this opera one of the new orchestral ef-



fects was produced by beating the bass drum with birch rods. In "Salomé" the snare drums take part of their punishment from wooden hammers.

There are several amusing and some serious anecdotes regarding the first performance of the opera. The regular singers of the opera house declined one after another to take leading rôles and eventually the part of *Elektra* was taken by Lucille Marcel. Madame Krull was the first singer cast for the part, and the following anecdote is told of an event at a rehearsal. Richard Strauss called out to Madame Krull, "You must be still more hateful in your acting of that speech." She did not hear, but Madame Schumann-Heink, who was standing forward on the stage, caught what the composer said, and addressing Madame Krull interpreted thus, "The Royal General Music Director says you must be still more like a colleague in your manner of expression."

It was reported that Herr Schuch, the conductor, strained a muscle in his arm trying to bring out the full force of the orchestration. Madame Schumann-Heink after three performances was so hoarse that she had to postpone her appearance at the Royal Opera in Berlin,

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and when she was asked to sing the part of *Klytemnestra* in America she declared vehemently that she would not sing it for \$3000 a performance though she had many children and needed the money, but the horror of being chased by the insane and murderous *Elektra* was too much for her.

Once von Schuch rapped for silence in the orchestra: "That part, gentlemen," said he, "we will repeat; moreover, with all your power. It was not satisfactory the first time. I thought I heard the voice of a singer."

A critic from London wrote: "You either love it or loathe it. The one thing certain is that, if you take any interest in the modern development of musical art, you cannot ignore it."

After the opening performance in New York, Madame Mazarin, who took the part of *Elektra*, was asked as to her feelings. She declared that she had neither eaten nor slept for two weeks, while rehearsing the part.

"*Elektra* is a tragic embodiment of vengeance," she said, "but it is vengeance gone mad. You go mad yourself in singing it. To make your face a mask of terror is simple enough. But to communicate your terror to

every individual in those dim rows beyond the footlights you must have something more than facial contortion; you must put your soul into your eyes, and it is not always so easy to manage your soul."

Madame Mazarin fainted with exhaustion at the end of the first performance. Madame Ger-ville-Réache, who sang *Klytemnestra*, resigned her part permanently and was replaced by Madame Doria.

In London the part of *Elektra* was taken by Edythe Walker, an American singer who has been mentioned in these pages. She was considered inimitable in the part. Her acting was superb and singing a little short of wonderful. Miss Walker said that she was always exhausted and unable to move for some time after each performance. Then she would have a thorough massage and a good supper, and she felt all right the next day.

The performance at the Manhattan Opera-House was considered a great success. The artists were adequate, the orchestra and scenery were excellent, and so were the box office receipts which are said to have amounted to \$19,000. But how about the audience?

Reports say that the audience departed si-

lently, most of them showing signs of the horrible experience which they had just undergone.

The production of "Elektra" was the chief sensation of 1910. This opera of Richard Strauss, when produced in Germany, Austria and Italy, had caused, in each country, a tremendous sensation, and in New York it did not fail to provide critics and public with matter for pen and tongue. Mr. Hammerstein warned his patrons that this was no ordinary opera. "Don't be bamboozled," he said, "with the idea that 'Elektra' is musical rot; that it is artistically 'impossible;' that it is composed by a mad man to a poem written by a mad man about a mad woman, and possibly that only a mad impresario would think of producing it. That is all current cant. Forget it!

"To be sure, it is difficult, excessively difficult, for both the orchestra and the singers to learn and interpret. Strauss has unquestionably gone the limit. He has travelled close to the North Pole, but there is no Dr. Cook fake about his adventure. The proof is there in the score, in its real music. Quite true he casts aside the sensuously beautiful time and time again; he lays on the color with his brasses in pretty thick daubs now and then. He is not

chary in using discords, awful discords, when he wishes; but he means something every time he does it. He intends to express a hateful idea or portray an ugly emotion. He can be just as beautiful in his musical expression when he musically illustrates the recognition of brother and sister and the love which binds them one to the other."

A few excerpts from the writings of the critics concerning this remarkable opera may be permitted.

Mr. Arthur Farwell wrote in *Musical America*: "One might remark upon the innumerable extraordinary things which Strauss makes the orchestral instruments do, but to describe these would only mislead one into supposing that such startling effects dominate over lyrical beauty, which is not the case. The horrors of the drama are from first to last enveloped in an ideal lyrical atmosphere, so that one knows not whether he is torn most by the awfulness of the story or enchanted most with the infinite lyrical magic of this music. So complex is the tonal web that the unusual dissonances fall into their natural place and pass by almost unnoticed."

That this view of the case was not shared by all alike is shown by Mr. W. J. Henderson in



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*The Sun*: "The orchestral background is one vast kaleidoscope of continually changing color. Jarring discords, the desperate battle of dissonances in one key against dissonances in another, settle themselves down into total delineations of shrieks and groans, of tortures physical in their clean definition and audible in their gross realism.

"Can you conceive of the inward scream of a conscience in the flames of the inferno being translated into polyphonic utterances of instruments writhing in a counterpoint no longer required to be the composition of two or more melodies which shall harmonize with one another, but of melodies which shall spit and scratch and claw at one another like enraged panthers?

"Snarling of stopped trumpets, barking of trombones, moaning of bassoons and squealing of violins are but elementary factors in the musical system of Richard Strauss."

And Mr. Finck in *The Post* wrote: "If the reader who has not heard 'Elektra' desires to witness something that looks as its orchestral score sounds, let him, next summer, poke a stick into an ant hill and watch the black insects darting, angry and bewildered, biting and

clawing in a thousand directions at once. It's amusing for ten minutes, but not for two hours. Is this progress?

“ Is it progress to use the human voice as Strauss does? Madame Schumann-Heink, who is noted for her robust voice, found the strain of singing *Clytemnestra*, in Dresden, so great that she resigned after the first performance. She has related how, when conductor Schuch, out of regard for the singers, moderated the orchestral din, Strauss declared, ‘ But I don't care a hang about the voice; I want the orchestra fortissimo! ’ At the Manhattan, Mr. De la Fuente probably used too weak a dynamic scale, for the voices were usually audible, and once in a while one could actually understand the words.”

Mr. Krehbiel in *The Tribune* writes: “ The noise of the explosion of ‘ Elektra ’ is over. How long will the reverberations last? Until public curiosity is satisfied. Not a moment later. That has been the story of Richard Strauss's operas from the beginning. Each is looked forward to with the expectation that it will provide a sensation, a new thrill. The sensation having been felt, the thrill experienced, there is an end of the matter. Such art

works are not like jealousy, 'which doth make the meat it feeds on.' Interest burns itself out speedily because it finds no healthy nourishment in them; nothing to warm the emotions, exalt the mind, permanently to charm the senses, awaken the desire for frequent companionship or foster a taste like that created by contemplation of the true, the beautiful and the good."

"Salome" repelled many people on account of its disgusting details. "Elektra" gave the audience cause for reflection. The opera was briefly described thus: "It is a story of an unceasing cry for revenge on the part of *Elektra*. Her father *Agamemnon* has been slain by her mother, *Klytemnestra*, and the latter's paramour, *Ægisthus*. The brother, *Orestes*, has been banished. Between waiting for *Orestes*, loathing her mother, and despising *Ægisthus*, endeavoring to lash the soul of the sister, *Chrystothemis*, into a revengeful fury, *Elektra* turns into a mad creature. She slinks about the stage in rags, her eyes wild and her soul aflame with rage. She digs in the courtyard of the castle to find the axe which slew her father, — digs like a dog seeking a buried bone. The news is brought to her that her brother, *Orestes*, is dead. She decides to do the

deed herself. *Orestes* arrives disguised, and the murder is accomplished.

“ The score simply drips cacophony. It requires an orchestra of one hundred and fifteen instruments, and pays no regard at all to the human voice, on which the demands are super-human.”

Grand opera is classed under the head of “ amusements.”

Mariette Mazarin is a thoroughly French singing actress. She intended at first to be an actress and was trained for that purpose by Lelois at the Paris Conservatoire. But M. Lassan discovered that she had a voice, and she changed her mind about her career and studied singing under Lassan until she made her début, which took place at the Paris Opera-House in “ *Aida*.” After this she had engagements in several cities of Europe before she was brought to the Metropolitan Opera-House. Here Madame Mazarin made a sensational appearance as *Elektra*, on its production in New York, January 29, 1910. Although she had witnessed a performance of the part by Madame Krull at Cologne, she did not begin to study it herself until New Year’s day, less than a month before the first performance.



Madame Mazarin was described as beautiful, young, witty, piquant, magnetic, intellectual, sentimental, tactful, and everything charming. A little romance was connected with her visit to America inasmuch as her devoted admirer, Pierre Louzy, a poor student from Paris, followed her to this country and prevailed on her to marry him. The wedding took place on December 7, 1909, and was done secretly, as the happy couple feared that it might be displeasing to the impresario. It was not at all displeasing to the newspaper reporters. Something of the romance was dimmed by the fact that Louzy is the second husband.

Although she was one of the singers engaged by Mr. Hammerstein at the opening of the Manhattan Opera-House, Madame Mazarin did not come into prominent notice until after her startling impersonation of *Elektra*.

Of Madame Mazarin's interpretation of the part of *Elektra*, at the production of Strauss's opera of that name in New York, Mr. Finck says: "The chief honors went to Mariette Mazarin, whose *Elektra* will be remembered as one of the most powerful and repulsively fascinating impersonations ever witnessed on the operatic stage. She could hardly have achieved



such a result had she not been an actress before she went on the operatic stage. In sordid attire, fanatical facial expression and mad gesture, she was the exact embodiment of the text and the music, striking terror into the heart at the gruesome climaxes, especially the digging for the axe, and the moments when the king and queen are being murdered. When both were dead, wonderful was the change in her face — a look of triumph which was reflected in the music, and makes its closing pages an atonement for all that had gone before. She actually *sang* the music allotted to her throughout the opera, though it makes cruel demands upon the voice. The mad whirl of the dance of death exhausted her so completely that when she appeared with the other singers before the curtain, in response to tumultuous applause, she fainted away. Is it progress to assign to singers such inhuman tasks? ”

During this season Hammerstein brought forward a large number of singers new to America, as grand opera singers.

Marguerite Sylva was born in Brussels where her father, Christian Smith, was a physician. She was musically educated at the Brussels Conservatory, and made her *début* at Drury

Lane, in London, when very young. Not knowing English she memorized the words of the opera and sang with apparently a thorough understanding of their meaning. Miss Sylva first came to America with Beerbohm Tree's dramatic company in 1895, and afterwards went into light opera at the Herald Square Theatre in New York. In September, 1898, she appeared as *Suzette* in "The French Maid," and was then leading woman in "The Princess Chic." In 1899 she was in "The Fortune Teller" company when there were associated with her Alice Neilsen and one or two other singers who have become well known.

On September 14, 1906, after studying in Paris with Madame Delattre, Marguerite Sylva made her Parisian début at the Opéra Comique, as *Carmen*.

In 1909 she became a member of Hammerstein's company, in which her impersonation of *Carmen* was spoken of as being, "as far as composition of the part is concerned, the most interesting, the most distinguished, the most vivid that has been seen since Calvé first visited this country. Sensual, but never vulgar, never common, and sung with beauty of tone, etc."

Madame Sylva is known in private life as

Mrs. William D. Mann, her husband was formerly manager of the Herald Square Theatre in New York.

Soon after Marguerite Sylva appeared at the Manhattan Opera-House in 1909 she was interviewed by the ubiquitous newspaper man and gave some very valuable advice to prospective opera singers in regard to Paris, from which city she advised them to keep away. Incidentally she told a pathetic story of her own early struggles in New York, which does not absolutely fit in with the foregoing biographical account as to her first coming to America, yet the difference is slight, — she is more likely to have got her theatrical engagement in a minor part while in New York, than to have been engaged abroad and come with the company. Managers do not generally pay for ocean voyages of the minor characters, however much they may like the impression to go about that they are doing it. A certain amount of magnificence always impresses the public.

Miss Sylva said that when she was eighteen she ran away from her home in Brussels because her mother would not let her wear a silk dress on a rainy day. She thought her mother was a tyrant, although she had ample oppor-

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tunity later to change her mind. With fifteen dollars in her pocket she arrived in New York, and immediately began to seek employment at the theatres. The managers laughed at her and said, "Why, my dear girl, you can't speak English. How can you expect to play?"

It was not very long before her fifteen dollars had shrunk to ten cents, and yet no employment. She was very hungry, having eaten nothing for two days, when she went into a cheap restaurant. Not knowing what to get for her money she watched the people, and when the waiter came she ordered a share of the biggest thing that she had seen carried past, and was much relieved when she found that it cost only ten cents. She ate ravenously, finishing every bit. When she went to her room she was very sick, the people in the house were frightened and sent for a doctor. He tried to find out what she had eaten, and eventually was able to explain to her that the rind of watermelons is indigestible.

In a week she was well enough to resume her hunt for employment, and she found that she could have sung in choruses, but she would not do this. She tried to learn a little English, especially the names of things to eat. Then came



her opportunity. She was engaged to play the part of a French maid, with a theatrical company. In a short time she was receiving good compensation, and was able to send money home to her mother, who had prophesied that she would soon be writing home for funds.

Later on Miss Sylva went to Paris, and on account of what she saw there she issued her warning to young American singers, which, by the way, called forth a quantity of indignation from the managers of the principal theatres in Paris, who vehemently asserted their respectability and their *paterfamiliarity*, if we may coin a word for the occasion.

Salla Miranda, a young Australian, from Melbourne, who went to Paris for study, was engaged by Hammerstein in 1909 for his preliminary season of opera at popular prices. She did so well that she was engaged for the regular season. She was young and gifted, with a voice high and flute-like, and sympathetic in the middle and lower registers. Miss Miranda had made her *début* in Paris during the previous year, as *Gilda* in "Rigoletto," and had made a hit in "Les Huguenots." She had also sung at the Luxembourg in Holland and at Covent Garden.



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Emma Trentini is a native of Mantua, and her father was a soldier. After his death she was sent to a convent where she remained for six years. One of the nuns, noticing the quality of her voice, decided that it was worth training. She was taught solfeggio at a school in her native city and then her mother was advised to take her to Milan, to the Conservatoire. In this enterprise a prosperous neighbor gave a little help, and she went through her course satisfactorily. After graduation it was still difficult to find an engagement, but at last an opening was offered at a small town called Ivrea, where she made her début in “*La Traviata*.” She was then seventeen, and did not understand acting, but as she knew how to sing she made a success. Engagements followed in Turin, Palermo, Rome, Naples, and Milan, and it was in Turin that Oscar Hammerstein heard her and thought that she would be an acquisition for the Manhattan Company. He engaged her for five years. She was always popular with New York audiences, and like many Italians, she was superstitious, so she invariably asked the manager for a quarter of a dollar “for luck” before going on the stage.

Miss Trentini distinguished herself chiefly



CARMEN MELIS



by her characterization of *Yniold* in "Pelléas et Mélisande," which has been called ingenious and picturesque.

When Carmen Melis made her début in New York on November 26, 1909, as *Tosca* the *Globe* said: "Madame Melis is seemingly a singing actress in the best sense of the word. Unlike most of the singers at the Manhattan Opera-House she has come here almost unheralded. Only the more notable therefore is her success, because won simply and solely on personal merit, and in no wise discounted by the flourish of anticipatory trumpets.

"Madame Melis is young. The charm of youth is in her face, her figure, voice and bearing. There is no suggestion of immaturity. She is a woman. Character informs the clearly chiselled features and the head, crowned with abundance of jet black hair, is finely poised. The warmth of temperament that imbued her acting yesterday, was controlled by judgment and no little art. And Madame Melis is effective in song as well as in action. The voice itself is delightfully fresh. If at times the singer was somewhat reckless in her use of it, at others she sang with skill and taste as well as genuine feeling."

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Carmen Melis was born in Cagliari, on the Isle of Sardinia. She studied with Madame Teresina-Singer of Florence, and later in Paris with Jean de Reszké. Her operatic début was made at the San Carlo Theatre, Naples, in 1906, in Mascagni's "*Iris*." She created the part of *Thaïs* in Massenet's opera of that name, at the Costanzi Theatre in Rome, and met with such success that Massenet wrote her a personal letter expressing his warmest thanks for her interpretation of his heroine.

She appeared at Milan, Venice, Palermo, Cairo, Odessa and Warsaw, always winning laurels. After her engagement at the Manhattan Opera-House she came to the Boston Opera-House in its second season and was chosen to create the part of *Minnie* in "The Girl" in the Boston production. She has filled many parts and has been a leading attraction.

In 1909 a new tenor was announced, who was to make Caruso and Bonci look to their laurels. This was John McCormack, a young Irishman (born in Athlone, 1884), who made his début at the Manhattan Opera-House on November 10 as *Manrico* in "*Il Trovatore*," with Tetrizzini.

McCormack was educated at the Summer



Hill College, County Sligo. He entered into a singing competition in Dublin in 1903 and rendered his selections with such thrilling effect that he captured the prize. Spurred on by this success he went to Milan and studied seriously for two years. His voice is a lyric tenor, soft, true and sweet, and while he had not absolute control he sang with wonderful grasp and with excellent phrasing. It was acknowledged that not in many years had a voice been heard so pleasing and acceptable, so free from rough usage and so accurate even when forced.

Mr. McCormack has lately been and still is a member of the Chicago-Philadelphia Opera Company, and has distinguished himself in many rôles.

Nicolo Zerola, who has been recently singing with the Chicago Opera Company, first appeared in this country with the "Italian" Opera Company at the Academy of Music. He suddenly gave up his engagement with this company, causing something of a stir, and went to Hammerstein. The "Italian" company apologized for Zerola's absence, which was, of course, on account of illness, and a few days later the "Italian" company ceased to exist. Meanwhile Oscar Hammerstein declared that

Zerola was under contract to him, and when he found him singing in another company he was indignant and took immediate steps to stop him.

Some excitement was caused by the engagement at the Manhattan Opera-House of a tenor singer whose name was Carasa, and who was therefore expected (apparently) to become a rival of Caruso. He appeared at the Manhattan Opera-House in September, 1909, in the preliminary season, and appeared to be a tenor of good promise, — young, good physique, and possessing a manly voice.

Gustav Huberdeau has been in America several seasons and has built up a reputation as a satisfactory and reliable singer. He is noted for his "devil" parts, for he sings *Mephistopheles* in "Faust," the *Devil* in "Grisélidis," *Mephisto* in "The Damnation of Faust" (Berlioz), and *Satan* in Cesar Franck's oratorio "The Beatitudes," in addition to which he has ready for performance, *Mefisto* in Boito's opera "Mefistoféle."

M. Huberdeau was born and educated in Paris, a member of a military family. He sang as a boy in a church choir, and having good musical talent and no taste for a military life,



Photograph by — MATZENE — Chicago

GUSTAV HUBERDEAU AS *HIGH PRIEST* IN "SAMSON ET DALILA"



he entered the Paris Conservatoire and devoted four years to hard study. Having served his year in the army he graduated from the Conservatoire and made his début at the Opéra Comique in "*Il Barbieri*." Although he has sung in many opera-houses in France he remained for several years a member of the Opéra Comique.

In New York he created the rôle of *Orestes* in "*Elektra*."

Orville Harold is a native of Indiana, where he was born on a farm, his mother was French, father English. He spent some of his early years in Kansas, but returned eastward and went to Indianapolis. He began to meet with success in his musical efforts, and having an excellent memory and being a quick study, he became a very useful singer. He accompanied Tetrazzini on a concert tour and thus aroused her interest. When Hammerstein engaged him he was filling engagements in the variety theatres.

When Hammerstein first heard Orville Harold he decided to send him abroad to study with de Reszké, but found that he could get sufficient instruction in New York.

Henri Scott, the American basso, was one of



the operatic "finds" of Oscar Hammerstein who engaged him for the season of 1909-1910 at the Manhattan Opera-House, just as the young singer was completing his plans for going abroad. He made his début in the rôle of *Ramfis* in "Aida," and the striking resemblance between the quality of his voice and style of singing to that of the famous French basso, Pol Plançon, was at once noted.

Mr. Scott is a native of Philadelphia, Pa., and enjoys the distinction of being undoubtedly the first entirely American-trained singer to achieve success in one of the principal companies in the United States, as well as in a European city; for he not only obtained his vocal training at home but learned all his rôles and stage deportment, besides mastering three foreign languages, here in America.

At the close of the last season at the Manhattan Opera-House Mr. Scott went abroad for the first time and soon found his way into Italy, where he secured an engagement to sing in Rome. During the season of 1910-1911 he sang at the T  atro Adriano, making his d  but as *Mephistopheles* in "Faust." His success in Rome resulted in his engagement by Director Dippel of the Chicago Grand Opera Company.

Prior to his advent into opera, Mr. Scott achieved quite a reputation as a concert and oratorio singer, and in 1908 supported Caruso in the celebrated tenor's first and only concert tour in America.

Until a few years ago Mr. Scott was also a famous athlete, having been a champion oarsman for several seasons.

One of the foremost baritones now appearing on the operatic stage in America is Giovanni Polese, who is a member of the Boston Opera Company. Born in Italy, he early showed signs of possessing a voice of great quality and marked dramatic ability. For besides being a great singer his acting is well above the average seen on the operatic stage.

Signor Polese received his musical education in Italy, and made his début in Milan, and his name is familiar to all opera goers in the principal cities of Europe.

Oscar Hammerstein engaged him for his Manhattan Opera Company, where he made his first American appearance.

Signor Polese joined the Boston Opera Company in 1911, and has been of great value to the organization ever since.

“ Mr. Polese's *Sheriff* is an interesting fig-

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ure; not so quietly sinister in action and repose as was another sheriff we have seen; not so melodramatic; but it is not too extravagant, and in the second act there is a fine brutality when he would hold *Minnie* in his arms."

In January, 1910, it became an open secret that the rivalry between the Metropolitan and the Manhattan Opera-Houses was producing results which were financially disastrous to both. A deficit of a million was expected at the Metropolitan Opera-House, while the astute Oscar Hammerstein owned up to a loss of a quarter of a million. There were rumors of strained relations between Mr. Dippel and the directors of the Metropolitan, but to this we have referred elsewhere. Efforts were made to unite the interests of the two houses, and eventually an agreement was reached by which Oscar Hammerstein quitted the operatic field in America, and promised to keep out of it, or out of certain cities for a period of several years. The Philadelphia-Chicago Company was formed and Andreas Dippel became manager. This company took over the scenery of the Philadelphia house and many of Mr. Hammerstein's singers. Other fragments of the wreck went to the Metropolitan Opera-House, and the

fierce competition was at an end. In its place was established a sort of operatic trust by which New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago were to have companies of their own, but were to be affiliated through the exchange of leading singers.

The Metropolitan Opera-House gained strength in the French department of its company by taking over Renaud, Dalmores, Sammarco, and Gilibert. Madame Tetrazzini also went to the Metropolitan.

One of the best reviews of the competition was written by Mr. H. T. Parker, in the *Boston Transcript*, as follows:

“Through his first season as an operatic manager, even when public favor had begun to crown his work, Mr. Hammerstein was fearful of the Metropolitan. During his second, when Miss Garden and Madame Tetrazzini had joined his forces, and ‘ Louise ’ and ‘ Pelléas ’ stood in his repertoire, he was contemptuous of it. During the third, when the Metropolitan was struggling through the change from the régime of Mr. Conried to the present ordering of its affairs, he was loftily patronizing. Last spring (1909) when the Metropolitan had promised ‘ the full strength of its com-



pany ' to mistrustful Chicago, and Mr. Caruso was the victim of half nervous and half vocal ills, it was in sore straits for a tenor. Outwardly, for three years, the temper of the Metropolitan towards Mr. Hammerstein had been lofty contempt. Who was this parvenu manager pushing into our field? Last April it had to swallow its pride, put aside the pretence of disdain, and entreat from Mr. Hammerstein the loan of the tenor, Zenatello.

“ The director of the Manhattan acceded to the request, veiling his Olympian satisfaction under words of brotherly solicitude for the plight of ‘ the other house.’ Being an astute man of business, he also exacted — or believed he had exacted — his price; the opportunity when he chose, to take his company to Chicago unhampered by his rival. Accordingly he made his preparations to send his company to Chicago in the course of the current season. One theatre only, in Chicago, is suitable for opera on a large scale, the Auditorium, and when Mr. Hammerstein sought it, contracts between its management and the management of the Metropolitan denied him access to it at any time available for him. Mr. Hammerstein, as his way is, chose not to recollect that he had ex-



cluded the Metropolitan Company from the Boston Theatre in similar fashion last year. As for Chicago, he had been spitted on his weapon; he had been tricked by the Metropolitan, or he believed that he had been tricked. He was, and still is, angrily vindictive. He resolved to fight the Metropolitan at every turn, and so far as he can lay his plans in advance, he has laid them."

Mr. Parker continues: "The gods proverbially love a good fighter. Mr. Hammerstein is a good fighter; he loves fighting for its own sake; and the gods have been kind to him accordingly. In expansive and intimate moments, especially at the end of a season, he has sometimes confessed (as gossip runs in New York) that he has been surprised at his own good fortunes. He has his own courage, his own faculty of constructive imagination, his own tireless diligence to thank for many of them, but the operatic fates have been kind. They gave him Mr. Renaud, because ill-informed and provincial Heinrich Conried had never happened to hear of one of the illustrious singing actors of our time. They gave him 'Louise' and 'Pelléas,' 'Thaïs' and 'Les Contes d'Hoffmann' which, for long, the Metropolitan

might have had for the asking. They opened to him the neglected mine of Massenet's operas — the Manhattan began last month with his thirty-year-old 'Hérodiade' for 'the first time in America.' When Europe yielded him no notable and promising new opera, a year ago, there was 'Salome,' which the Metropolitan had whipped from its doors in a truly American spasm of intriguing prudery, awaiting successful revival. Strauss's 'Electra,' the most considerable new venture of the current winter at the Manhattan, has had only a short vogue of curiosity in Germany. Here in America, the chances are that Mr. Hammerstein will somehow kindle interest in it."

Mr. Hammerstein so pushed the Metropolitan Company that he caused them to perform the greatest task ever undertaken by an opera company in American, one hundred and twenty subscription performances at the Metropolitan Opera-House during a season of five months' duration, forty more at the New Theatre, and one or two a week in Brooklyn, Philadelphia and Baltimore; eleven performances in Boston, and three or four weeks in Chicago. In fact, the Metropolitan directors were forced to maintain practically a double company, of

which one portion or another was almost incessantly on the road. This made a great drain upon the strength and endurance of the company, but it resulted in what was called a tidal wave of music. "From New York to San Francisco," said an enthusiastic writer, "from Atlanta to Los Angeles, from Boston to Seattle, from New Orleans to Minneapolis — you may follow any degree of latitude or longitude and come across cities and towns of all sizes in which music flourishes as never before." However much the finances of the two houses suffered the musical community throughout the land was very much benefited. Prophecies were made that within a few years there would exist a chain of opera-houses throughout the land, similar to those which all the European countries possess.

Mr. Lawrence Gilman writing in *Harper's Weekly* on the "Passing of the Manhattan Opera-House," pays tribute to the courage, ability and genius of Hammerstein in the following passages:

"Within the space of three years Mr. Hammerstein produced at the Manhattan Opera-House more new works than were given at the Metropolitan Opera-House during a period

comprising the last two seasons of the Abbey, Schoeffel, and Grau régime, the entire five seasons during which Maurice Grau ruled alone, and the first three seasons under the consulship of Conried: a period covering ten seasons, and extending from 1896 to 1906 — the year, it will be observed, of the opening of the Manhattan Opera-House and the salutary but perturbing irruption of its proprietor and manager into the torpid operatic life of the metropolis.

“ This, then, was the second of Mr. Hammerstein’s triumphs. He found our operatic civilization in New York — which, then, was the same as saying in America — stagnant and decadent, suffering from inanition, from lack of energy, fresh impulse, and adventurous purpose. He has left it with a taste for and a sincere curiosity concerning new works, an inclination toward new conceptions in musical art, a wholesome and thoroughgoing distaste for routine and hackneyed repertoires: with, in short, a larger outlook, a quicker responsiveness, a more plastic and eager spirit.

“ Mr. Hammerstein, the impresario who was a personage, will not readily be forgotten. He had a genius for unwisdom, a propensity for doing egregious, inexplicable, and wantonly



foolish things, which was often vexatious to his well-wishers; yet he had a more than compensating genius for accomplishment. His intuition was extraordinary, his insight had at times the quality of inspired clairvoyance; his store of native shrewdness was large and frequently available; and his resiliency of spirit, his intrepid audacity, his resourcefulness, his buoyant and adventurous energy, have become proverbial. But the memory and the praise of his deeds will persist after the man himself has become a legend — a legend amusing, romantic, incredible.”

Miss Garden, in speaking about the improved standard of opera in America and especially in regard to French opera, said:

“ And the man who has brought this about over here is Oscar Hammerstein. He was always the man who knew what the moment demanded. It is ridiculous to say that a city where there are about sixty theatres could not support two opera-houses. If Oscar hadn’t had a moment of disheartenment, if there had only been somebody to buck him up, he wouldn’t have given up the fight here. Campanini said to me that if he had remained with Hammerstein he would never have let him shut the Manhattan



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Opera-House up. They cannot do at the Metropolitan what our company did. To do modern French they need a modern French company, and it is a great pity they don't have one, as the opera going public wants French opera nowadays."

A story characteristic of Hammerstein is that of the planning and building of the Philadelphia Opera-House. After he had decided on the venture he soon secured a sight at North Broadway and Poplar St., and stated that he would have his theatre built in six months, and that it would be the finest opera-house in the world. His plans were drawn up and approved in a week, and the architects and builders furnished with rough drafts. The plans were put through the building department at the City Hall in forty-eight hours and by April 3 all contracts were signed. Hammerstein then started for Europe in search of talent, leaving the supervision of the work in competent hands. There is an amusing story concerning a strike of plasterers, which must have taken place, of course, after his return from Europe. After scouring other cities for men and finding that the unions had forestalled him, and that all the men whom he engaged were met at the

station and turned back to their homes, their fares being paid by the union, a happy thought struck him. He hired sixty or more men who were out of work, sent them out of Philadelphia with instructions to get on the trains near that city and come in as strike-breakers. They, too, were met by the union pickets, stopped, and received five or ten dollars each to return to their supposed homes. Finding that his plan worked successfully, he kept it up until the union had paid out some \$25,000 in this way. But he had to keep on hiring new men to avoid the recognition of "repeaters." This story might be more plausible if Mr. Hammerstein were his own building contractor.

His Philadelphia Opera-House had a seating capacity of forty-five hundred. There was but one balcony and one row of boxes twenty-eight in all, and the balcony had a seating capacity of twenty-five hundred.

Hammerstein was fond of injunctions. On one occasion a tenor named Albani was engaged to sing with the San Carlo Company in Boston. He was under contract to Hammerstein, or, at any rate, Hammerstein claimed a contract with him. The performance took place with Hammerstein's constable standing behind

Albani on the stage, much to the amusement of the audience. Constantineau was once threatened in a similar way and had to resort to a ruse to escape service of a writ. Marguerite Sylva was also enjoined from appearing with the Boston Opera Company on the ground of a contract existing with Hammerstein. She declared, however, that Hammerstein had broken the contract by assigning to her a part inferior to that for which she had been cast in "Grisélidis."

It frequently happens that a contract with a singer is a very complicated affair and covers much more than the amount of money to be received and the number of performances. For instance, it is related that Caruso, in 1911, signed a contract with the Imperial Opera-House at Vienna in which certain rules of the house were waived for the distinguished tenor. Although smoking is strictly prohibited Caruso was to be allowed to smoke until the curtain rose. A fireman was specially detailed to stand behind him to throw the ends of his cigarettes into a basin of water. Again, no one is allowed on the stage behind the scene who has no direct business there,—Caruso had permission to be attended by his doctor, prompter, sec-

retary, and conductor, who were allowed to escort him to his dressing room and back again.

During the past decade lawsuits have been found excellent sport, and perhaps good advertising by opera singers as well as by managers. The ill-fated Mascagni tour was the cause of a large array of suits and counter-suits, of which one heard little beyond their institution.

An amusing story is told of the escape of Dalmores from America and how he avoided service of a suit for \$25,000 brought against him by the Metropolitan Company. Dalmores donned the uniform of the cornet player of the ship's band, and went on board unsuspected by the minions of the law.

Madame Tetrazzini made a sensational escape from a small army of process servers who wanted to hand her papers in a suit for \$39,000 brought against her by an impresario, who said she had broken a contract made with him in 1904. The lawyers of the impresario had succeeded in finding out that Madame Tetrazzini was booked to sail by the *Mauritania*, so they placed a careful watch at the gangway. The prima donna was equal to the occasion.

She rigged up her maid to represent herself and sent her in an automobile to the ship, where papers were duly served on her, but Tetrzini, going to the dock dressed as a maid and in an ordinary hack, ascended the steerage gangway unobserved, and the steamer was off before the mistake could be rectified.

So far as the purposes of this book are concerned we have now finished with Oscar Hammerstein, but it must not be supposed for a moment that the end of Oscar Hammerstein came with the closing of the Manhattan Opera-House. Not at all. He has built and opened an opera-house in London and has stirred up the management of Covent Garden as he did that of the Metropolitan Opera-House. He has pursued similar tactics in England to those which he pursued in America. When the wealthy people did not sufficiently patronize his house he reduced the fees and gave "opera for the people." Yet King George attended the opening of the theatre and congratulated Hammerstein on his achievement and wished him prosperity.

He has already startled the old world with one of his discoveries, — a young American girl from Allentown, Pa., Felice Lyne. Without



preliminary advertising he put her on to sing *Gilda* in "Rigoletto" with Maurice Renaud and Orville Harold. The house was not full, and nothing extraordinary was expected, but as soon as Miss Lyne began to sing people stirred in their seats with amazement.

Miss Felice Lyne is a native of Kansas City, where her father and grandfather were osteopathic physicians. When she was a small child her father moved to Allentown, Pa., where she attended the schools and college. She also took singing lessons of Frank S. Hardman, who urged that she be sent abroad to study. Accordingly, in 1908, Mrs. Lyne took her daughter to Paris where she studied under de Reszké, Madame Marchesi and d'Aubigne.

In July, 1910, she met Oscar Hammerstein, who sent for her to come with her mother and see him. She took no notice of the request, as she had heard that Hammerstein was out of grand opera for good, and she would consider nothing else. No one had then heard of his London plans, but it was rumored that he was going to manage light opera. Hence Miss Lyne refused to see him or to take up any proposition. She was considering an offer from Hans Gregor of Berlin, and there were tentative

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propositions from Covent Garden, but she wanted to sing in America.

Oscar Hammerstein had no intention of letting her slip. He was convinced that she was well worth while, so he sent her an offer of a five year contract with a large salary. This offer was refused. Then he almost doubled the offer and again he met with a refusal. Then he told her of his London plans and she signed the contract.

When she stepped upon the stage at the new opera-house, she was absolutely unknown. She had not been singing ten minutes when the audience realized that they were listening to an unusual singer, and she met with a tremendous reception. The news of her success was soon spread abroad and in a few days she became famous, but success was apparently too much for her, and before the end of the season she had a dispute with the impresario in which she is said to have inflicted punishment upon his devoted head with the score of an opera, the cause being that she felt her contract to be unfair. She had the prima donna spirit without the experience which lends some justification.

Miss Lyne is very small and has charming stage presence and personality, also a wonder-

ful voice, which fulfils dramatic demands with spontaneity and grace. Experience will bring dramatic force and mastery, and perhaps teach her to be kind to the poor impresario, who has many troubles.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE METROPOLITAN OPERA - HOUSE UNDER GATTI - CASAZZA AND DIPPEL

OWING to the failing health of Heinrich Conried during the season of 1907-1908 it was evident that his resignation of the directorship of the Metropolitan Opera-House could not be long delayed. When Conried resigned, the board of directors appointed, as temporary administrator, Andreas Dippel, the tenor, who had long been connected with the house. At the end of the season Dippel was given authority to go abroad and engage soloists and chorus for the following season.

In the meantime the board of directors were looking about, and eventually succeeded in engaging Signor Gatti-Casazza, manager of the opera-house of La Scala, at Milan. Signor Casazza stipulated, as part of his agreement, that he should bring with him his conductor, Arturo Toscanini, who had been associated with him for some years at La Scala.

The Metropolitan Opera-House was supposed, by the public, to be under the dual control of Casazza and Dippel, and it was apparently so understood by Dippel. Mr. Casazza, on the contrary, understood that Dippel was his assistant, as his own contract stated that he would have supreme control, at least for one year, with the privilege of renewing the contract for two or more years. These matters are mentioned at this point as they will help to account for incidents to be related hereafter.

Signor Gatti-Casazza is a native of Ferrara, where his father was president of the municipal theatre. Although educated with the idea of becoming a civil engineer, young Casazza was so closely associated with the theatre that he naturally took a great deal of interest in operatic matters, and when his father moved to Rome, he, at the age of twenty-four, was offered the presidency of the theatre as his father's successor.

Signor Gatti-Casazza remained at Ferrara as president of the theatre for five years, during which time his work was so efficient that he brought the theatre into prominent notice throughout Italy.

During his last year at Ferrara there was a



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crisis in the affairs of the opera in Milan, and La Scala was closed. Nothing of the kind had happened since 1778. The city was either unable or unwilling to furnish the customary subsidy. A stock company was formed, and Gatti-Casazza was elected director of the opera-house. After ten years of successful management at La Scala, he was invited to the Metropolitan Opera-House in New York, and took up his duties at the beginning of the season of 1908-1909.

Andreas Dippel first came to this country in 1890 when he was a member of the German opera company, whose performances under the baton of Anton Seidl made an epoch in operatic performance in this country. Like many other singers, Dippel was intended for a commercial career, and previous to the discovery of his vocal gifts had some years' experience in business life. After his appearance in America in 1890, he returned to Germany, and in 1893 was appointed one of the principal tenors of the Royal Court Opera at Vienna. He came back again to the Metropolitan Company in 1898 with a greatly enhanced reputation, and made a success of the part of *Siegfried*, notwithstanding the fact that Alvary was still fresh in

the memory of opera lovers in America. Since that time Dippel had remained with the Metropolitan Company, where he was a most useful member, being able to sing in Italian, French and German, and having a large repertoire. Dippel was therefore an excellent man in the emergency of Conried's retirement.

Rivalry between the Metropolitan and the Manhattan Opera-Houses was now at full blast. It extended beyond singers, to the production of new works, the chorus, the scenery, and the whole field of operatic management.

We are permitted to quote the following article from the *Nation* which gives a good view of the situation at this time :

“ Operatic managers and their press agents have a habit of magniloquently proclaiming each new season as the most brilliant ever planned. For once this assertion may be accepted as an approximation to the truth. The constellation of operatic stars to be seen and heard during the next twenty weeks at our Metropolitan and Manhattan Opera-Houses is dazzling. Germany laments the loss of her best singers, and so does France; while we have so many of these great vocalists that some of them will get what has been wittily called

‘ hush money,’ since it will be impossible, especially at the Metropolitan, to give the guaranteed number of appearances, which nevertheless must be paid for.

“ Notwithstanding this array of talent, the singers are by no means to have everything their own way. Heretofore it has been generally the policy to trust to the fact that, in the opinion of the large paying public, ‘ the singer’s the thing,’ and the opera of secondary importance. But of the present season the popular singers are not to be the only feature; we are to have a number of new and interesting operas. For this reform Oscar Hammerstein is responsible. His surprisingly successful experiment of producing operas by Charpentier, Debussy, and Massenet that had been previously shunned, refuted the inveterate belief that the public does not want operatic novelties. Pleased with his success in venturing where Mapleson, Grau, and Conried had feared to tread, he is about to make his local patrons acquainted with Massenet’s ‘ Grisélidis ’ and ‘ Le Jongleur de Notre Dame,’ Breton’s ‘ Dolores,’ Jan Blockx’s ‘ La Princesse d’Auberge,’ which will be absolutely new here; and Massenet’s ‘ Manon,’ Saint-Saëns’s ‘ Samson et

Dalila,' and Bizet's 'Les Pêcheurs de Perles,' which to most of our opera-goers will be as good as new. It is to be regretted that to these he is going to add the morbid 'Salome' of Richard Strauss.

"It is probable that even if Mr. Hammerstein had not set a good example, the new managers of the Metropolitan would have paid more attention than their predecessors to fresh works. The joint managers have been casting about for unfamiliar operas to enliven the stale Metropolitan repertory, and their promises, most of which will probably be kept, are certainly alluring to those who believe that in music as in literature and the drama new productions should have a hearing. Of special interest will be D'Albert's 'Tiefland,' the most successful German opera since Humperdinck's 'Hänsel and Gretel;' Humperdinck's new opera, 'The Children of the King,' which is to have its first performance here on any stage, probably under the composer's own direction; and Goldmark's 'The Cricket on the Hearth.' Italy will be drawn on for two works new here — Puccini's 'Le Villi' and Catalani's 'La Wally;' while Paris will contribute its latest success, Laparra's 'Habanera.' Bohemia is to



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be represented by Smetana's 'The Bartered Bride,' and Russia by Tchaikovsky's 'The Queen of Spades.' 'The Pipe of Desire,' by Prof. F. S. Converse of Harvard, is also promised. This will be, as the prospectus says, 'the first work by an American composer to be heard at the Metropolitan Opera-House.' "

One of the most important additions to the Metropolitan Company in 1908 was Emmy Destinn, a woman of unusual and diversified talent.

Emmy Destinn is a Bohemian and her fame was made in Berlin, singing in German. When she came to America it was said that she had never sung Wagnerian rôles and did not expect to do so, yet *Elizabeth* and *Elsa* are two of the rôles in which she has distinguished herself in this country.

Miss Destinn was born in Prague, and her real name is Rittl. She sings under a soubriquet taken from one of her teachers, Madame Loewe-Destinn, with whom she studied singing when she began serious work in that line. At first when she began to study music the violin was chosen, and the voice was not cultivated for some time.

When Madame Loewe-Destinn had sufficiently





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EMMY DESTINN



prepared her pupil, she took her to Berlin and obtained a hearing before Von Huelsen, the intendant of the opera-house. Von Huelsen engaged her at once, and she remained in Berlin until she came to sing at the Metropolitan Opera-House in New York, though she had accepted a few temporary engagements elsewhere, as, for instance, when she sang in London in 1905 and achieved a great triumph in "Madame Butterfly," and as *Donna Anna* and *Aida*.

In 1901 Cosima Wagner invited her to sing *Senta* in the first Bayreuth production of "Der Fliegender Hollander." These performances made her famous to the outside world. In her dramatic success Miss Destinn has been compared to Madame Calvé, indeed, she has been called by some Americans the greatest German singing actress of the day.

When Richard Strauss produced his much talked of opera "Salome" Emmy Destinn created the rôle of *Salomé* in Berlin, and was selected by Strauss to sing the part in Paris.

Miss Destinn is said to be a collector of antiquities and to be the possessor of a fine collection, which she keeps at her home in Prague. She is also fond of cats, and has three in her retinue. She is also a writer of poems, plays,

etc. Miss Destinn may also be considered an optimist, for she does not think that the drama is on the decline, nor that the opera singers of old were very much superior to those of the present day. In an interview in 1912, she expressed some views similar to those of Miss Morena. "One is given so little chance to sing a wide variety of rôles at the Metropolitan. My repertoire includes something like eighty operas, and see what I have been doing all the winter! Only *Aida*, *Tosca*, *Nedda*, *San-tuzza*, *Elizabeth*, *Elsa*, *Eva*, *Marie*, *Gioconda*, and *The Girl*! Only ten parts, in other words. And then think of it! One is expected to sing only twice a week when I should like to be singing three or four times, as I do in Germany. The repertoire here is so small compared with those of the German houses!"

Perhaps Miss Destinn is suffering from the efforts of former singers who, being paid for the season, sang as seldom as possible, while the custom now is to pay so much a performance, the singer being guaranteed a certain minimum number of performances. It is wonderful how often singers are in condition to sing when each appearance adds to their income, and per contra, they are delicate, fragile

things when they are paid by the month or the season. Then again the impresario must be considered. He is striving to give the public "the best." Hence he must have a large number of good singers, in order to impress the public with the magnificence of his undertaking, and to give the desired variety, and he must not allow his best singers to be too accessible. He must try to keep the public hungry.

Since her first appearance in 1908 Miss Destinn has steadily tightened her hold upon her American audiences. Let us quote two criticisms which appeared in 1912, the first relates to her appearance as *Tosca*, the second to her interpretation of *Minnie* in the "Girl of the Golden West." The latter is interesting as dealing with the matter of nationality in music.

"Thursday evening marked an epoch in a somewhat varied career of Puccini's 'Tosca' at the Metropolitan. The *Tosca* of Emmy Destinn was an accident due to the indisposition of Olive Fremstadt. Not before had the *Tosca* been heard in New York, and seldom has a Metropolitan audience so completely abandoned itself to joyous astonishment as on this occasion. The applause following Mme. Destinn's 'Vissi d'Arte' seemed likely to go on



indefinitely. At the end of this act she had to acknowledge fifteen recalls. The rôle of *Tosca* has, it is said, been much haggled for by Metropolitan sopranos. Let there be no ungracious comparisons. Suffice it that Mme. Destinn amply compensates the acutely exploited physical lure of some of her predecessors with a vocal perfection refined to the n'th power.

“ Mme. Destinn uses her voice as a skilled composer, a composer, say, like Puccini, uses the instruments of an orchestra. The oboe takes whispered phrases from her mouth with scarcely a sense of transition. Into the awaiting trumpets she pours streams of fiery gold. Her tones sweep aslant the shimmer of strings. Over and beyond this her dramatic instinct is warm, vital and sincere.”

“ Miss Destinn sang the music of *Minnie* as it had not been sung here. Her glorious voice and her supreme vocal art gave eloquence to Puccini's music. Her impersonation was engrossing. This *Minnie* was not too conscious of her face and not a vain coquette. Primitive, a woman of instincts rather than acquirements, she knew the roughness of the life and was without thought of her own superiority. She knew her Bible and had old-fashioned ideas

concerning love and duty. And in her heart she was romantic. The *Sheriff*, picturesque figure that he was, would not have appealed to her even if he had not been married. *Johnson* was her man, and the moment he was in danger she forgot the other woman. A simple but an intense soul.

“ And in the portrayal of this woman Miss Destinn was not conventionally melodramatic in song and gesture. Her repose was more effective than the restlessness of others. How every gesture told! How expressive her face in every scene! The apparent simplicity of her art might well be studied by singers who insist on proving to an audience that they are acting.

“ It has been said that only an American woman is fitted by nature to take the part of *Minnie*. Mme. Nordica and Miss Farrar would agree to this and argue the point fluently and even warmly. But *Johnson* and *Minnie* and the *Sheriff* and the miners and the Indian couple and the others on the stage are only Italians masquerading as men and women of other nations and singing Italian music. Let us not take opera too seriously. Miss Destinn is by birth a Czech. It would not matter

whether she were a Russian, a Spaniard, or born in Brattleboro or Terre Haute. On the stage she is *Minnie*."

A mezzo-soprano who has shown distinct originality and whose popularity has steadily increased is Maria Gay, a Spaniard, who appeared at the Metropolitan Opera-House in 1908. She did not begin her musical studies until she was sixteen years of age, and then her progress was interrupted by an uprising against the monarchy, in which she took a prominent part, and spent nearly six months in jail for singing a revolutionary hymn at a meeting of the Separatists.

Madame Maria Gay was brought up in an atmosphere of art. She studied sculpture, but through a change in fortune she was obliged to abandon this study, and she took to the piano. When Raoul Pugno visited Barcelona, her home, she played and sang for him, and he advised her to cultivate her voice. She had not time then for study, nevertheless Pugno engaged her to sing at some of his concerts. After a while she was invited to other places, and one day sang in one of Ysaye's concerts at Brussels. On this occasion the director of the Theatre de la Monnaie was present and she



Photograph by J. Williams, Boston

MARIA GAY





was introduced to him. He made the startling suggestion to her that she learn the part of *Carmen*, of which, he assured her, she was quite capable. He gave her five days in which to learn it, and as this seemed like a challenge she took the matter up and began.

She had known the cigarette women of Barcelona since she was a child and was able to represent the character to the life. She worked hard at the music, and sang the rôle at the end of the five days. She was successful, but realized that to follow up the success she must study singing. She proceeded to Paris and there met an American soprano, Ada Adiny, whose pupil she became, and in a year she began to sing again in opera.

Since that time her fame has increased and she has sung in most of the large cities of Europe and in all the South American cities in which opera is given.

Madame Gay's interpretation of the rôle of *Carmen* was called the sensation of the season: "A more vital, carefully constructed, strongly consistent interpretation of the rôle has rarely, if ever, been seen here. It was not without precedent, but as far as at least one aspect of the character was concerned, it was developed

with unshirking, inexorable logic, with multiplicity and perfection in detail, to a point that had not been reached before. Many were antagonized by the frank interpretation. As many more were roused to the summit of enthusiasm by the force and verity of it." In fact, a warm and widespread discussion was inaugurated on the part of the general public. One critic called it a "raw and bleeding slice of life."

Other rôles in which Madame Gay has distinguished herself are *Pilar* in "La Habanera," which was called "a strong and sombre impersonation, intense in its concentrated repose, intense again when it flamed across the shadows;" *Dalila* in "Samson et Dalila," — "artistic, not overplayed, and vocally beautiful to hear;" *Lia* in "L'Enfant Prodigue," — a soprano rôle; *Santuzza* in "Cavalleria Rusticana," — "an impersonation of grim realism, at times stirring by its sheer dramatic force, and provocative of pity;" *Azucena* in "Il Trovatore," — "a characterization highly vitalized, illusive and convincing;" *Amneris* in "Aida;" *Maddalena* in "Rigoletto," and *Geneviève* in "Pelléas et Mélisande," in which "her every act and phrase was authoritative."

After a romantic courtship of some two or three years, during which she had been associated with him in opera, Maria Gay married the tenor Zenatello.

Frances Alda, who is now Madame Gatti-Casazza, is an Australasian by birth, being a native of Christchurch, New Zealand. At the age of fifteen she went to Melbourne, for, both parents dying when she was quite young, her grandparents took charge of her. She passed her girlhood in comfort, and was educated at a fashionable private school. Her aunt, Frances Saville, who was an excellent singer and had appeared at the Metropolitan Opera-House in New York under Maurice Grau, now took a great interest in her, and she had another relative who had been an operatic manager. It was therefore not difficult for her, when she wished to earn some money, to secure an engagement with Williamson and Musgrove, the Australian theatrical managers, to appear in a revival of Sullivan and Gilbert operas, and she sang first in "The Sorcerer."

In due course she went to London, and singing one day unprofessionally at a social function she met Marcel Journet, the operatic singer. He remarked upon her voice, and ex-

pressed a high opinion of it. A mutual friend repeated the remark to her, and she was soon in Paris looking up Madame Marchesi, who promised to make a prima donna of her in twelve months. It is related that during her studies Madame Melba heard her and remarked to Marchesi that it was a pity her new pupil had no voice to train. Notwithstanding that opinion she appeared less than a year later (in 1904) at the Opéra Comique, where she remained for a season singing lyric soprano rôles.

From Paris she went to Brussels where she created the leading part in an opera founded on the "Sleeping Beauty," and sang many other parts, notably *Marguerite* in "La Damnation de Faust." The critics were charmed with her voice and her beauty of face and figure.

After her success in Brussels she accepted an engagement at Parma, though attempts were made to dissuade her. This engagement proved to be a stepping-stone to Milan, where she appeared as the heroine of Charpentier's "Louise," under the management of Signor Gatti-Casazza. Thence she went to Covent Garden, and then to Buenos Ayres previous to coming to the Metropolitan Opera-House.

It is said that in 1906 she was engaged for



BELLA ALTEN AS NEDDA IN "IL PAGLIACCI"





the Manhattan Opera-House, but she never sang there. Perhaps there is some truth in the story that an all powerful prima donna of that house, on hearing of this engagement, cabled a brief but emphatic message to Oscar Hammerstein, and caused him to change his mind.

During her career at the Metropolitan Opera-House her best success was made as *Desdemona* when Slezak sang *Otello*. In this rôle it was said: "She makes a beautifully pathetic and affecting little figure alongside the towering Slezak, and her acting has an extremely delicate and wistful beauty. She sang with a pure and limpid beauty of voice, giving much variety of expression to the 'Willow' song and devout feeling to the 'Ave Maria.'" She has also been mentioned as "the most brilliant, the most picturesque and most charming *Manon* on the opera stage."

Bella Alten has made herself popular in New York in such rôles as *Musetta* in "La Bohème," *Nedda* in "Il Pagliacci," *Columbina* in "Donne Curiose," *Senta* in "The Flying Dutchman," and especially as *Grétel* in "Hansel and Grétel." She studied with Engel and Joachim at the Imperial Conservatory in Berlin, and later went to Orgeni. Her first appear-

ance in opera was made at Leipzig, after which engagements followed in Berlin, Brunswick, Cologne, and Covent Garden. It was while she was at Covent Garden that Conried heard her and engaged her for the Metropolitan Opera-House. Miss Alten is Mrs. Hermann Deri.

Madame Leffler-Burkhardt secured leave of absence from the Royal Opera-House in Berlin in order to come to America and fill a short engagement at the Metropolitan Opera-House. She was born in Berlin and studied with Anna von Meisner, a pupil of Madame Viardot-Garcia.

Madame Burkhardt began her career in 1890 at Strassburg, as a coloratura soprano. She spent a season at Breslau and one at Cologne. From 1894 to 1898 she sang at Bremen, and there she commenced to study dramatic rôles. She then appeared at Weimar and at Wiesbaden and in 1906 sang *Kundry* at Bayreuth.

Leonora Sparkes was a well known concert and opera singer in England. Dippel heard her at Covent Garden and after a private hearing offered her a contract at the Metropolitan Opera-House in 1908. She has been a member of the company ever since.

Felicie Kaschowska, a Polish dramatic

soprano who was at the Metropolitan Opera-House in 1908-1909, came first in 1895 as a light coloratura soprano. She sang at Wiesbaden and Frankfort, and became leading dramatic soprano at the Grand Ducal Opera-House at Darmstadt.

Madame Marianne Flahaut was one of the leading beauties of the Paris Opera-House. She was born at Huy, near Liège, in Belgium, and was the daughter of a wealthy manufacturer. As she grew up a longing for artistic fame seized upon her, and she went to the conservatoire at Liège, where in the course of three years she won first prizes for singing, piano and opera. She was now engaged for the Grand Opera at Paris and made her début there as *Amneris* in "Aida." She remained in Paris for nine years before coming to the Metropolitan Opera-House, and during that time she appeared in numerous rôles, among which the most successful were *Erda* with Jean de Reszké as *Siegfried*, as *Fricka* and *Ortrud*, and as *Fides* in "Le Prophète." She also made a great success as *Orpheus* and it was with a view to his revival of this work in New York that Conried engaged her, for she seemed an ideal *Orpheus*.

Madame Flahaut is tall and stately, — six feet or more, — she has grace and charm, soft, sympathetic face, voice sweet and low, besides which her manner has distinction and her movements are harmonious. Nevertheless Madame Flahaut did not prove to be a distinct success. She made her American début on January 8, 1909, as *Amneris* in “*Aida*” when she was spoken of thus:

“ Madame Flahaut is a mezzo-soprano from Paris. Her voice is of very good quality, — impressive because of the beauty of its tone. She has a strikingly handsome presence and displays knowledge of stage routine. She is a valuable member of the Metropolitan ensemble.”

Jeanne Maubourg, who has been a member of the Metropolitan Company for some years, was previously engaged at the La Monnaie in Brussels for several seasons. She is a Belgian by birth and belongs to a class of singers called the “*Dugazons*,” who derived their distinction from Madame Dugazon, a celebrated light mezzo-soprano who was the first exponent of this particular style of singing.

Miss Maubourg has a large repertoire and has become a favorite owing to her extraor-



dinary intelligence and fascinating manner of acting. Before coming to America she had appeared two seasons at Covent Garden, and had sung at the Opéra Comique, in Paris.

On her return to America, in 1911, Miss Maubourg brought with her a husband, Claude Benedict from the Chatelet Theatre in Paris, whose real name is Claude Marie Bede. The marriage took place at the City Hall in New York, when Miss Maubourg's real name was divulged as Gossaux. She made her first appearance at the Metropolitan Opera-House as *Lola* in "*Cavalleria Rusticana*," in 1908.

Riccardo Martin is a native of Hopkinsville, Kentucky. At the age of fifteen he left home and went abroad to study the piano. He returned to America, however, and entered Columbia University where he became a pupil of MacDowell, who was at that time professor of music in that university. He acquired some proficiency in composition, and wrote several songs, and a chorus which was sung by the Mendelssohn Glee Club. In this way he came in contact with many singers of prominence. He now returned to Germany, but soon went to Italy and applied for admission to the conservatory of San Pietro Ameijello. The authori-

ties heard him sing and denied him admission on the ground that he had no voice and no musical talent.

Being thus repulsed, Mr. Martin remained in Naples and took lessons with Ben. Corelli, who taught him enough to definitely fix his purpose. He next proceeded to Paris and became a pupil of Sbriglia, after which he returned to New York with the intention of teaching, since he could not afford enough lessons to become a singer.

At this point a wealthy citizen of New York became interested in him and offered to see him through the preparation necessary for an operatic career. Martin returned to Sbriglia, but he heard Caruso sing at the Sara Bernhardt Theatre, and learned much from observation of that great artist.

When prepared for his *début* he was engaged at Nantes, and began his operatic career in October, 1904, singing in "Faust," which was his only rôle during the first season. An offer was made to him from Toulouse, but he declined it because he found that he was expected to sing dramatic rôles.

An engagement in Italy now came to him and he went to Verona and sang Ponchielli's "An-



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**RICCARDO MARTIN**



drea Chenier," repeating the performance nineteen times in one month. This gave him a reputation in Italy and he was invited to sing the same opera at the Del Verme Theatre in Milan.

During a stay in New York he met Henry Russell, manager of the San Carlo Opera Company, but declined the offer then made him, though when it was repeated in the following year on more satisfactory terms he accepted, and made his American début in New Orleans during the season of 1906-1907.

Martin was asked to sing at the Metropolitan Opera-House by Conried, in the presence of Richard Strauss, who offered him an engagement at Berlin. But it was not until 1908 that Mr. Martin became a member of the Metropolitan Company.

The German importation for this season, in the way of tenors, was Eric Schmedes, of whom one account said: "Eric Schmedes brought to hearing a voice which possesses no charm whatever. Some one has written that the singing of some German tenors reminds one of shooting an Edam cheese from the mouth of a cannon. Schmedes hurls his tones energetically, — he is a giant with a big voice, — but of beauty of tone



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and of faultless tone-production there seems to be but little to record. He comes from Vienna, and has been active at Bayreuth."

It was never supposed that Eric Schmedes was a lyric tenor. He was engaged to sing heavy dramatic parts. It appears to be the function of the German tenor to sing dramatic rôles, and to sing them in a manner acceptable to Germans. Hence, if we import such singers the truer representatives they are of the style which they represent, the better they fulfil their mission.

Eric Schmedes began his career as a baritone before discovering the range and true quality of his voice. Born in Gjøtøl, near Copenhagen, he was sent to Berlin when quite young to study the piano. In 1888 he sang some Danish Folksongs at an entertainment where Madame Viardot-Garcia was a guest. She advised him to study singing, so he went to Berlin and became a pupil of Nicholas Rothmuhl, and later of Artôt Padilla in Paris. He made his début at the Court Theatre at Wiesbaden as *Valentine* in "Faust" and was engaged for three years. In 1894 he sang *Rigoletto* at the Stadt Theatre at Nuremberg, and then retired for a year to study with Röss at Vienna. He

appeared once more as *Rigoletto*, but being advised to try tenor rôles he again retired and studied with ISSERT. Six months later he became first tenor at the Stadt Theatre at Hamburg.

Jean Note, who came to the Metropolitan in 1908, was a colonel in the Belgian army before he became an opera singer. Moreover, he had distinguished himself for bravery and had received one gold and two silver medals for saving life. His greatest honor was his being made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor for risking his life to prevent a railroad collision near Paris in 1898. M. Note was for fifteen years first baritone at the Paris Opera-House, where the best of his rôles were *Salamambo*, *Messidor*, *Sigurd*, etc.

Carl Jorn came to the Metropolitan Opera-House in February, 1909, with a repertoire of a hundred rôles and a contract for three years. One critic declared that he was the greatest German tenor since Alvary, and another said, "He has a voice of little power, but fresh and lyrical, his technique is better than that of the average German singer. He gave no evidence of histrionic talent, yet his presentation was intelligent and established him in public favor."

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At any rate it is acknowledged that he established himself in public favor.

Jorn was the son of parents not particularly well-to-do. He was educated in the household of the governor of Riga, where he was born. Upon the death of the governor he became a protégé of Baron Vietinjhoff-Scheel. Jorn did not discover that he had a voice until he was eighteen, and the principal conductor at Riga, Lohse, found promising traits and introduced him to Schulz-Harinsen, the baritone at the Stadt Theatre. For a year he studied with the baritone and with a Mrs. Jacobs, but Berlin appealed to him as a place offering a future for a singer, so he went there and studied with one Ress, — son of Ress of Vienna. Jorn made his début in 1895 at Freiburg. Two years later he was engaged at Zurich, where he remained until 1899, when he went to Hamburg. In 1902 he received an appointment at the Berliner Hof Oper. He sang three seasons at Covent Garden and in all the important cities of Europe before coming to America.

Pasquale Amato first appeared in America at the Metropolitan Opera-House in November, 1908, and has had a consistently successful career in this country ever since. He is a native



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CARL JÖRN AS *LOHENGRIN*





of Naples, born in 1879, and educated with the idea of becoming a naval officer. After his voice was discovered he devoted his entire time to the study of music under the most prominent masters, and he made his début at the Théâtre Belini in his native city.

After that the usual round of engagements began, and he toured Italy, Germany, England, Egypt and South America, and finally was leading baritone at La Scala for two seasons, during which he created, in that theatre, the rôle of *Golaud*, in “*Pelléas et Mélisande*.”

Signor Amato is one of those singers who have established a firm grip upon the American public. Besides being gifted with a wonderful voice, he is possessed of unusual histrionic ability, and has revealed himself a singing actor either in tragedy, comedy, melodrama or romance. He has sung the usual baritone rôles, but the chief interest has been centred in his creation in America of the parts of *King Hadræot* in “*Armide*,” *Carlo Worms* in “*Germania*,” and *Jack Rance* in “*The Girl of the Golden West*.” The latter being the opera which appeals to the greater number of Americans, the following account is transcribed from the *Boston Herald* and is supplementary to the

account of Miss Destinn who was *Minnie* in the same performance.

“ Mr. Amato fell no whit below her (Miss Destinn) with his *Sheriff*. For the first time in our Opera-House a singing-actor characterized the part and also sang the music. On the purely histrionic side, Mr. Amato surpassed himself and all expectation. Here was the *Sheriff* as a pale, smooth, sinister man, pacing nervously and abstractedly up and down the floor of the Polka Saloon, wandering in and out of it, full of pent emotions and gnawing thoughts. He seemed to watch for his opportunity with *Minnie*, to plead his affection to her without sinister under motive, but with the intensity of genuine feeling, to recoil under his rebuff and to fall back into sinister musing again. The action of the pursuit was relief. He came with cool cunning and suspicion into the cabin on the mountain; he watched, waited, surmised, until circumstance seemed to make him master there. Then he seized her fiercely, only to be thrust away again, only to be bidden to the ordeal of the cards. It pleased his gambler's faith in chance, his gambler's bitter humor. He was beaten and disappeared into the darkness. He might have been sitting there

in all the interval, ruminating, hoping, contriving, when the curtain rose upon the scene in the forest. His triumph over the captured outlaw was no show of outward contempt. It was the satisfaction, gleaming through, of an inner and bitter hatred. And so at last was the *Sheriff* characterized in outward and visible action, in suggestion and revelation of inner nature and spirit, in songful speech, in histrionic definition. Sometimes Mr. Amato's tones were as pale and tense as the *Sheriff's* face; sometimes they were as sinister as his eyes; once and again they released passion; and at the end they were the voice of hate that waited long and quietly for its satisfactions. Together the singer and the composer made the songful music *Rance's* own speech."

In 1912 Mr. Amato was "interviewed" in regard to an article in which M. Dalmores had made observations regarding German and Italian singers. "The Frenchmen have many qualifications for the task of interpreting Wagnerian rôles," said M. Dalmores, "that German artists have not. . . . The Italian artist is not successful as a Wagnerian interpreter. He generally lacks musicianship and broad education." To which Signor Amato replied

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that the statements were too general, and that it was not wise to characterize the singers of a nation by the faults or virtues of any one artist. "The art of singing," he said, "is universal, and you cannot pick out the singers of one country and say that they are all good or bad. It is absurd to say that there are national schools of singing. Just as the world recognizes the genius of a Velasquez and a Raphael, a Wagner and a Debussy, so will the Wagnerian singer be judged by his individual talent and not by his nationality." All of which seems to be good common sense. Are there not too many classifications in matters of art? Or rather, do not the classifications apply to mediocrity, and do not the great works, great singers, and things that are great generally rise above the ordinary classifications?

Leo Rains, who is a New Yorker by birth, and has been called the pioneer of American singers on the German stage, began his career as a boy soprano in "Francesca de Rimini," in 1883, with Lawrence Barrett, the tragedian. In 1896, after studying for six years with Oscar Saenger, he went to Paris and studied with Jacques Bouhy for a year, and then secured an engagement with the Damrosch-Ellis Company



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PASQUALE AMATO





in his native land. In 1899 he was invited to sing as a " guest " at the Dresden Royal Opera, as a result of which he remained at that house for ten years. With the exception of a short engagement at the Metropolitan Opera-House in 1908 he has remained in Germany. He holds the title of Royal Chamber singer at Dresden and has established a great reputation as a singer of German Lieder.

Allen Hinckley, who joined the Metropolitan Company in 1908, was born in Dorchester, Mass. He attended the public schools in Boston and in Providence, to which city his family moved during his boyhood. He entered Amherst College, but changed to the University of Pennsylvania. He was prominent in musical matters in both colleges, being a member of their glee clubs. He also sang in choirs and directed a choir and choral society.

He now secured an engagement with the Bostonians, a well known " English opera " company of those days, and sang with them for two seasons. Going abroad he was very soon engaged at the Hamburg opera as principal basso, making his début as the *King* in " Lohengrin."

After five years at the Hamburg opera, during which he sang at Covent Garden, and two

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seasons at Bayreuth, Mr. Hinckley was secured for the Metropolitan Company.

In 1909 Mr. Hinckley was to have sung *Gurnemanz* at Bayreuth, but he was eliminated from that cast on account of having sung the part in New York. It is said that the reason given at Bayreuth was that there would be insufficient time for rehearsals, but in New York Mr. Hinckley is said to have sung the part without rehearsal, and to have been very successful.

Walter Soomer came to the Metropolitan Opera-House in 1909 to take the place of Feinhals who made his last appearance in Brooklyn on February the 17th and sailed on the following day. Soomer came from Leipzig, and had appeared at Bayreuth in 1908.

Herbert Witherspoon, one of the best known oratorio singers in America, surprised his friends by accepting an engagement at the Metropolitan Opera-House in 1908, and has since distinguished himself in Wagnerian rôles.

Mr. Witherspoon was born in Buffalo, N. Y., and is the son of the Rev. Orlando Witherspoon. He was educated at Hopkin's Grammar School in New Haven, Conn., and at Yale University, where he took the degree of B. A. with special honors in 1895. He studied two years in the

music department and two years in the art school at Yale. During his college career he began the serious study of the voice and later with leading teachers in Paris, London, and Berlin. He made his professional début as a concert singer in New York with Mr. Walter Damrosch and his orchestra in 1897, when he sang excerpts from "Parsifal." From that time he led a busy life as a concert and oratorio singer, having toured several times with the Pittsburg and Theodore Thomas orchestras, and appeared with leading organizations in America and in England, where he met with very good success.

Mr. Witherspoon's engagement with the Metropolitan Company did not mark the beginning of his operatic career, for after his study in Paris in 1898 he made his operatic début with Henry M. Savage's Castle Square Company in New York, and sang about one hundred and twenty-five performances in leading bass rôles. At the end of his fourth season at the Metropolitan Opera-House Mr. Witherspoon was engaged for two seasons more. His best successes have been as *Gurnemanz* in "Parsifal," *King Heinrich* in "Lohengrin," *Landgraf Hermann* in "Tannhäuser," *Pogner* in "Die Meister-

singer," and *König Marke* in "Tristan und Isolde." Besides his admirable voice Mr. Witherspoon has much histrionic ability and is noted for his excellent diction.

The season of 1908-1909 opened with a superb performance of "Aida," and on the second night "Die Walküre" was given in a manner which had not been surpassed in New York. D'Albert's "Tiefland" was produced on November 23, but was a complete failure, owing to the fact that there was too much dialogue, which wearied the audience. New York audiences want matters to keep moving. On December 17 Puccini's "Le Villi" was given, but also failed to please. On January 6, 1909, Catalani's "La Wally," given for the first time in America, did not make a great success, but Smetana's "Bartered Bride," produced on February 19, was more satisfactory. The other novelties of the season were a revival of "Falstaff," and the production of Laparra's "Habanera" and Tschaikowsky's "Pique Dame."

Thirty-two operas were given, — one hundred and thirty-four performances.

The end of the season of 1908-1909 found matters at the Metropolitan Opera-House in a very disturbed condition. The dual control



had evidently not worked in a very satisfactory manner.

When Mr. Gatti-Casazza and Mr. Toscanini, the conductor, arrived in New York they found the opera-house teeming with intrigue and jealousies and quarrels among the singers, besides being more or less hampered with old obligations, and pressed with a multiplicity of undertakings. They came with the reputation of men who were accustomed to enforcing their authority and discipline, and they proceeded to do so. Consequently the inner history of that season is full of " incidents " between the conductor and the singers. One popular favorite of many years refused to alter her interpretation of her part to suit Mr. Toscanini, — and her health suddenly gave way. Some refused to attend rehearsals, but discovered that they must do so or resign. The orchestra complained of too much rehearsal. When the singers went to Mr. Gatti-Casazza to complain of Mr. Toscanini they were told that he must be obeyed. Then they appealed for sympathy to Mr. Dippel.

Towards the end of the season Mr. Gatti-Casazza and Mr. Toscanini were re-engaged for three years, while Mr. Dippel was offered

a somewhat subordinate position. This aroused the sympathy of certain of the singers and they sent a letter to the directors asking that Mr. Dippel should also receive a renewal of his contract, for three years. The reply was quite prompt and very brief. It simply stated that "Mr. Gatti-Casazza is director of the Metropolitan Opera-House."

One of the curious features of the situation was that the Italian singers were prominent in the support of Mr. Dippel, a German, while Mr. Gatti-Casazza and Mr. Toscanini, Italians, were praised for giving the finest performances of Wagner that had been witnessed in New York.

The excitement was warm while it lasted, and a variety of opinions were expressed by those who favored one side or the other. One critic declared that while some of the productions had been excellent, Mr. Gatti-Casazza, who got the credit, had been merely an uninterested spectator.

One feature of the director's difficulties was expressed thus: "The artistic situation at the Metropolitan is at the mercy of people whose theory of life seems to be that it is a continued vaudeville show. The demand of society is that from 9 to 10.30 the stage should be occupied

by some great singer or spectacle of unusual interest.”

The solution of the problem gave satisfaction to most people. Mr. Gatti-Casazza reigned supreme at the Metropolitan Opera-House, and there is no more dual control. The establishment of the Chicago-Philadelphia Opera Company gave an opportunity for the unhampered use of Mr. Dippel's excellent managerial ability.

The season of 1909-1910 at the Metropolitan Opera-House opened with a long list of announcements, and a long list of singers, many of whom faded into obscurity after a hearing. But before proceeding with the Metropolitan Opera-House season it would be well to mention the New Theatre, in which an operatic enterprise was started, but did not prove prosperous or last long. Twenty-five operas were given, — fifty-four performances, the season opening on November 16, 1909, with a performance of Massenet's "Werther" in which Geraldine Farrar and Edmond Clement were the principals. This was M. Clement's first appearance in America and the impression which he created was most favorable, and has been amply verified by his subsequent career. "Werther" had its initial performance in

America at the Metropolitan in 1894, when the chief parts were taken by Emma Eames and Jean de Reszké, so that this at the New Theatre was a revival. In addition to M. Clement two other good singers made their first appearance on the same occasion, Alma Gluck, and Dinh Gilly, — soprano and baritone, and both met with good success.

Madame Alma Gluck is one of the most recent and most successful of the younger singers. She made her début in New York at the New Theatre in 1909, as *Sophie* in "Werther." The story of her rise to celebrity is most interesting.

Madame Gluck was born at Bucharest, Roumania, and came with her parents to New York when a small child. Her maiden name was Reba Fierston, and she is said to have been employed as a stenographer in the office of a young lawyer in New York, previous to her marriage to Mr. Gluck, which took place when she was still quite young.

It is said that one summer when she was in the Adirondacks her singing (as an amateur) attracted the attention of a gentleman, who advised her to go to Signor Buzzzi-Peccia, and take lessons. This she did, but with no idea of



an operatic career. She merely wanted to learn to sing well, and with that idea she worked hard, and in three years had a repertoire of ten operas. In 1909 her teacher suggested that she should sing for Mr. Gatti-Casazza, and to her surprise he offered her a contract for five years, which she accepted.

During the following summer she went with her teacher to Europe and heard operas. One of these was "Werther," which she heard in Paris, and liked so much that she learned it. On her return to New York "Werther" was being rehearsed and she was told to sing it at rehearsals, as the soprano who had been engaged for that part had not arrived. When the artist did arrive Mr. Dippel did not like her interpretation of the part, so Madame Gluck sang it at the performance, and stepped at once into fame.

During the season she sang eleven different rôles in "Bohème," "Pique Dame," "Stradella," "Orfeo," "Maestro di Capella," "The Bartered Bride," "Faust," "Rheingold," and of these only two, *Marguerite* and *Mimi*, were among the ten which she had studied previous to her contract.

Her opportunity to sing *Marguerite* came



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about through the illness of Madame Alda. The opera was to be given in Baltimore, and Madame Gluck was sent on at short notice. The people at Baltimore were much annoyed at the change of cast, but forgot their grievance as the opera proceeded. One of the critics wrote: "Instead of Madame Alda a beginner was sent to us. It was evidently a case of frying her on the dog, but in this instance we beg to state that the dog was well satisfied."

During the two seasons that she has been before the public Madame Gluck has been one of the most successful singers, and is a remarkable instance of those who, with practically no European training or experience, have found their opportunity and made good use of it.

We may be permitted to quote one criticism of Madame Gluck, made when she appeared as *Venus* in "Tannhäuser." It describes the charm of her voice, and of her art:

"Madame Gluck's artistic advancement has been rapid, very rapid, but it is doubtful if many of her sincere well wishers would urge her to add *Venus* to her repertory at this period in her career. The voice of this young singer is a lovely, liquid, lyric soprano. All New York admires her voice and her beautiful method.

So long as its possessor remains within the realm of lyric rôles the exquisite texture of the voice will not be marred. This is not to say that Madame Gluck should never attempt a rôle like *Venus*. Five or ten years hence, when her physique is stronger and her voice gains more power and dramatic color, she may follow other lyric sopranos and sing dramatic rôles. Last Saturday night the slim youthfulness of the *Venus* and the natural chaste purity of her voice did not present the kind of enchantress which the author portrayed. The voice of the singer was spiritual and virginal, and her girl-ishness was in strong contrast to the bulky form of Carl Burrian, the *Tannhäuser*. Of course, Madame Gluck sang finely, but her song was angelic, not sensuous. Gifted with uncommon intelligence, she was able to do much toward creating an impression on the dramatic side, but altogether, her appearance and vocalism suggested things celestial, not terrestrial."

Edmond Clement was a boy soprano when studying at the Polytechnic at Chartres preparatory to entering the university, for he was intended to be a civil engineer. He sang at the Cathedral, as did also his brother Georges, who became a throat specialist in Paris. His voice

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developed into a light, sweet tenor, and he went to study at the Conservatoire. At the end of a year he took a prize for singing, under Professor Warot. He was asked to join the Opéra Comique, although he had taken no lessons in acting, and knew nothing but the singing. His début was made in Gounod's "Mireille," and he worked hard to make the most of his opportunity.

Edmond Clement is regarded by many as the greatest French tenor of the present day, and since his first appearance in America the critics have been practically unanimous in declaring that in the artistry of song he has no superior. He has succeeded in establishing himself as firmly in the favor of opera and concert audiences in America as he previously did in Europe.

M. Clement has been engaged at the Opéra Comique for some twenty years. He has also sung in every principal theatre of Europe. In America he has been, since 1909, a member of the Metropolitan Company and has sung in the chief cities of America with the Metropolitan Company and as a guest.

While he has appeared in many rôles, perhaps the most popular one is that of *Don José*



EDMOND CLEMENT





in "Carmen," of which a review is here quoted:

"M. Clement made an ineffaceable impression when he appeared here as *José* last season, with Marguerita Sylva in the title rôle, but if recollection is not deceitful, he was even more striking this afternoon, probably on account of the splendid foil provided by the joyous animal vitality and the real dramatic force of Mme. Gay's *Carmen*. Each impersonation, most happily contrasted, gained by the other. M. Clement is past-master of the traditions of his rôle. Fortunately he is also a great interpretative artist. He moulded his own conception to collaborate with Mme. Gay, or it might be better to say, that in Mme. Gay he found the best possible collaborator to further his own ideas. At any rate, his business on the stage differed in certain groupings and in certain climaxes from his performances remembered from last season, but he built up his character and its dramatic development with even surer, more masterly strokes than at that time. His singing, his remarkable artistic employment of a small voice is now too well known in the principal cities of this country to call for any extended remarks upon that score, but it is impossible to forbear

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from speaking of the histrionic side of his achievements. Whatever the effect he desired to achieve, it was procured with the most remarkable economy of effort, with such unostentatious mastery that even when the final climax was reached in the last scene, and the audience simply tense watching him, there seemed to be left a certain amount of reserve. And the final scene, from the moment that the man staggered in, worn, haggard, a growth of weeks on his face, with the eyes of a fiend, was given with an intensity that forbade applause when the curtain fell."

When M. Clement resigned from the Metropolitan Company in 1910 his withdrawal was considered to be further evidence of the intention to Italianize the Metropolitan Company to the disadvantage of the French and German members. Clement was informed by Signor Gatti-Casazza, so we are told, that if he was engaged for the next season he would be required to sing chiefly in Italian rôles, taking the place of Bonci, who went into concert singing. This, following on the disappointing treatment of Madame Delna, seemed to indicate "a line of policy."

Dinh Gilly is the name of an Algerian bari-

tone, educated in French schools and with the experience of French opera-houses, who made his American début at the New Theatre in 1909. Since that time he has been a member of the Metropolitan Company, and has generally been considered a satisfactory singer. On one occasion he was called upon to sing *Rigoletto* as a substitute for Maurice Renaud, who was taken ill. He acquitted himself well, presenting an interpretation of the part that was dramatically powerful, consistently composed and definitely outlined.

A somewhat similar opportunity came to him in Boston in December, 1910, when he took the part of the *Toreador* in "Carmen," and both sang and acted impressively. "He has a fine and resonant voice," wrote one of the critics, "his diction is well nigh perfect, and his dramatic conception of the rôle of the *Toreador* is admirable. Only Baklanoff has equalled the Frenchman from Algeria, in recent years, and beyond that there is a far cry back to Del Puente in his graceful decline."

One of the amusing features of the season of 1909-1910 was that both the Metropolitan and the Manhattan Companies opened their Philadelphia season with a performance of "Aida,"

each making the greatest possible effort to outdo the other. The Metropolitan cast included Gadski, Homer, Caruso and Amato, while the Manhattan put forward Madame d'Alvarez, Madame Mazarin, Nicola Zerola, and Polese.

The season of 1909-1910 opened at the Metropolitan Opera-House with "La Gioconda," on November 15, with a cast including Caruso, Emmy Destinn, Louise Homer, Amato and Anna Meitschek, who made her début.

"Parsifal" was given on November 25 with Olive Fremstadt as *Kundry*, Clarence Whitehill as *Amfortas*, Blass as *Gurnemanz*, Burrian as *Parsifal* and Goritz as *Klingsor*.

On December 23 there was a revival of Gluck's "Orfeo e Eurydice," in which Louise Homer and Madame Gadski took the leading parts with notable success.

Verdi's "Otello" was given on November 17 for the purpose of introducing the new tenor, Slezak, who manifested a voice of rare quality, and created a marked impression. Madame Alda played *Desdemona*. Slezak succeeded also, during the season, as *Rhadames* in "Aida" and as *Manrico* in "Il Trovatore," but his impersonation of *Tannhäuser* stands



out as one of the most patent characterizations of the rôle given by any artist.

The first American performance of Franchetti's opera, "Germania," was given on January 22, 1910, with Emmy Destinn, Caruso and Amato in the leading parts. This opera was produced at La Scala, Milan, in 1902.

On March 18 an American opera, "The Pipe of Desire," by Converse, was produced, all the principals being American except one, Leonora Sparkes, who is English. The other principals were Louise Homer, Riccardo Martin, Clarence Whitehill, and Herbert Witherspoon. This work is reported as lacking realism and pictorial qualities, but skilfully put together, and having some expression and beautiful passages. It had been previously performed (semi-privately) at Jordan Hall in Boston.

During the season thirty-seven operas were given at the Metropolitan Opera-House, seventeen being Italian, twelve German, five French, and one each American, Bohemian and Russian.

Blanche Arral, who joined the Metropolitan Company in the season of 1909-1910, is of French and Belgian descent. She is the seventeenth child in a well known musical family named L'Ardenois of Liège, Belgium. When



she was ten years old she won first prize for singing and piano-playing at the Brussels Conservatoire, and Prince Chimay, president of the board of judges that awarded the prizes, persuaded her parents to send her to Paris for further study. She was at the Paris Conservatoire for three years, part of which time she was a pupil of Marchesi. At the conclusion of her course she gained a first prize for singing and was awarded a place in the Opéra Comique, where she made her début in the rôle of *Mignon*, which was followed by *Manon*, *Juliet*, *Carmen*, and *Lakmé*.

For three years she remained at the Opéra Comique and she was then two years at the Imperial Theatre Michel. She sang much in Russia and was decorated by the Czar. After a tour of Europe and Egypt (where she was decorated by the Khedive) she returned to Paris and Maurice Grau sought her and made a contract for three years, but a severe illness prevented her from singing at the Metropolitan Opera-House then, and she returned to Europe without making an appearance.

Miss Arral toured Australia at the head of her own company. In October, 1908, she sang at the Van Ness Theatre in San Francisco,

when she made such a success that some thought she overshadowed Tetrazzini, and the reports were so encouraging that the Metropolitan Opera-House people secured her.

In October, 1909, she made her début in New York. She was described as a small woman with a mass of dark hair, attractive presence, beautiful voice. Upper notes clear and bell-like and extraordinarily good low notes for one with such a high range.

Anna Case, a young member of the Metropolitan Opera Company, is the daughter of a mechanic who made a specialty of blacksmith's work. Her home is in South Branch, New Jersey, and when she was about fifteen years of age she began to learn how to shoe horses. While at this work she amused herself by singing, and in the course of time her friends, becoming convinced of her vocal possibilities, urged her to take lessons and advanced the money for that purpose. In due course Andreas Dippel heard her sing, and was pleased with her voice, which is a high soprano. At the age of twenty she became a member of the Metropolitan Company, taking small parts, and doing them so well that her prospects are considered excellent. At the close of her first con-

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tract she was re-engaged for a number of years. Her voice is a lyric soprano of good volume and a wide range, reaching with ease to F in alt. She was trained in New York by Madame Ohrstrom-Renard.

Jane Noria was spoken of as one of the youngest and most beautiful grand opera singers of the day. She is an American, born in St. Louis, and she made her début under her family name, Josephine Ludwig. She sang leading parts in an English opera company in America before going to Europe. She eventually secured an engagement with the Paris Grand Opera and succeeded well as *Marguerite*, *Juliet*, *Elsa*, *Elizabeth*, etc. She joined the Metropolitan Company in 1909.

Bernice de Pasquali is the daughter of Captain William James of Hull, Mass., the town which is known as the political barometer of its State. At the age of eight she began her studies at the National Conservatory in New York, and at sixteen she was already employed as a teacher in that institution. At the same time, one Salvatore Mangione de Pasquali was also employed there as a teacher, and he became attentive to her. They were married in 1896. Since 1902 Madame de Pasquali has gone



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BERNICE DE PASQUALI AS *GILDA* IN "RIGOLETTO"





abroad three times, appearing in London, Berlin, and St. Petersburg, and finally in Paris. She also sang for two years in Milan and Rome, her most successful rôles being the soprano parts in "Rigoletto," "La Bohème," "Il Barbière," "Lucia," "I Puritani," and "Faust."

She made her American début in January, 1909, in "La Traviata," but though her stage presence was attractive and she made excellent use of the few dramatic possibilities offered by the work, she was nervous and did not do herself justice. The audience was sympathetic.

In March, 1912, she again appeared at the Metropolitan Opera-House, and this time met with greater success. The following account of her performance appeared in one of the journals:

"Mme. de Pasquali's work commended itself highly to connoisseurs when she first appeared at this house a few years ago, and she has grown to be a far greater and more finished artist in the meanwhile.

"Both vocally and dramatically Mme. de Pasquali has improved greatly since she was last heard here. Her tones were very beautiful — particularly in the upper register, where

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they were of limpid purity — and she demonstrated conclusively that emotional coloring of the voice is not necessarily incompatible with coloratura singing.”

An interesting story is told of how Madame Pasquali got her first engagement in Milan. On her arrival her husband visited an agent but found little encouragement. “All the companies were full, — there was nothing at present.” While they were talking the telephone bell rang and a manager wanted a soprano immediately as his own was ill. By great persuasion the agent agreed that Madame de Pasquali might be one of twenty-five to sing for the manager, and she got the engagement.

Florence Wickham is a native of Pennsylvania and was educated at Beaver College in her home town, where she received a gold medal for vocal excellence. She studied in Berlin under Lilli Lehmann and Frau Mallinger and Franz Emmerich, and made her first professional appearance at the Royal Court Theatre at Wiesbaden when twenty years of age. She then sang at the Royal Theatre in Munich and was then engaged by Henry M. Savage for his “Parsifal” company with which, as *Kundry*, she toured the principal cities of the United

States. She then returned to Europe and appeared in many of the leading opera-houses, until she was engaged for the Metropolitan Company. In the summer of 1910, at a court concert in Berlin, Miss Wickham was presented with a medallion for Arts and Sciences and the title of Court Singer.

In private life Miss Wickham is Mrs. Eberhardt Lueder.

One Mademoiselle L'Huillier was engaged to sing the part of the child in "Tiefland" and it was intended that she should also appear as *Musetta*, but she did not prove acceptable to the critical New Yorkers except in the matter of "looking pretty." In her place Miss Leonora Sparkes was put, after a hurried coaching in the part. Miss Sparkes is an English singer. Her blonde type of beauty was criticized as not suggesting the Parisian working girl of the '30's, but she was acceptable in the part and is still a member of the Metropolitan Company. In fact, she was the only singer not of American birth, who took part in the production of Prof. Horatio Parker's opera, "Mona," in 1912.

Elvira de Hidalgo was one of the prima donnas of the Metropolitan Company at seven-

teen years of age. Born in Barcelona, she received her early training in Milan, in fact, all her training was early, for she ran away from home at twelve years of age because her parents objected to the stage. When they discovered her she was singing a small rôle in one of the leading theatres of Milan. She was attractive, and made her début in " *Il Barbière* " on March 8, 1910.

Eva Grippon, who came as a dramatic soprano to the Metropolitan Opera-House in 1910, made her début in 1906 at Nice in the " *Grands Concerts Symphoniques.* " Her first teacher was Rosina Laborde, who also taught Emma Calvé and Marie Delna, and later she was a pupil of Jean Lasalle, and of Rosita Maud of the Opera, in the subtle art of gesture and mimic expression. She made great progress during the first three years of her career. She was at the Manhattan Opera-House in 1909.

Probably the first accounts of Marie Delna to reach this country were those announced by Col. Mapleson in the '90's. She was then hardly known in her own country, and the invincible colonel made a great effort to secure her for his American company, — but without



success. Madame Delna, whose family name is Ledan, made her début at the Opéra Comique as *Dido* in Berlioz's "Les Troyens," June 9, 1892.

She was a servant at a little inn or restaurant at Meudon, which is said to have been kept by her grandparents, who brought her up, for she was left an orphan at a very early age. Certain musicians, among whom were Alexander Guilmant, the organist, and his wife, and Rosina Laborde, the singing teacher, used to frequent this restaurant and took an interest in the child. Madame Laborde, after hearing her sing, undertook to prepare her for the stage, and she was considered ready by the time she was sixteen, though the preparation which she received would, in these days, be regarded as insufficient. At the Opéra Comique she sang parts that were suited to her native and simply direct talent. She was excellent as *Dame Quickly*, and in peasant parts. She appeared in "Werther," "L'Attaque du Moulin," "La Vivandière," "Paul et Virginie" (as *Meala*), and *Jeanne* in "La Jacquerie," and she sang the parts of *Orpheus* and *Zerlina*. In 1898 she went to the Grand Opera-House where she sang in "Le Prophète," "Samson et Dalila," "La Favorita," etc., but the critics found



fault with her as one unacquainted with the traditions of the house, without the grand style, without finesse. They also criticized her vocal art.

She then returned to the Opéra Comique where she appeared as *Orpheus* and *Carmen*, and as the *Wicked Fairy* in "Haensel et Gré-tel," and *Marianne* in Bruneau's "L'Ou-ragan."

She was three years at the Grand Opéra after having sung for seven years at the Opéra Comique.

She fell in love with, and married, a Belgian named Adolph Heinrich E. Prier de Saone, and retired from the stage. Five years later she went back into opera. She was engaged for the Metropolitan Company in 1910, though all previous attempts to induce her to leave Paris had failed. The persuasions of Caruso added to those of Dippel prevailed.

At the Metropolitan Opera-House she appeared but twice in "Orfeo" and six times in "L'Attaque du Moulin," and on leaving this country she complained that she had been held in the background and had not been allowed the number of appearances for which her contract called. One of her appearances was at a

Sunday evening concert, but of her performance of *Orpheus* there are accounts which show her to be an artist of distinction. Indeed she was at one time considered the best contralto on the French operatic stage.

Mr. Aldrich, the critic of the *New York Times*, wrote: "It was the disclosure of a noble and beautiful voice of rich color and dramatic expressiveness, perhaps not perfectly equalized in all its extent, but used with technical skill and artistic sense. Madame Delna showed a fine understanding of the dramatic essence of the part of *Orpheus*. She enacted it with plastic beauty and grace of pose and action, with abundance of innate and reserve power. It was the performance of an artist of no ordinary power, and one that raises high expectations of what she will contribute to the rest of the season at the Metropolitan."

Mr. Krehbiel wrote, of this presentation of *Orpheus*: "Delna's beautifully poised head, her mobile face, her noble voice, her eloquent poses and movements, her nobly conceived and superbly preserved ideal of the character made up a representation which stirred the audience to its inmost depths."

Leo Slezak came to America with a reputa-

tion which was said to rival that of Caruso. He was born in Austria in 1874, at Schonberg. He showed musical ability early and by the time he was twenty-two years of age was already well known as an opera singer throughout Austria and Germany.

Slezak made his first conspicuous success when he sang at Berlin as a guest, in *Lohengrin*, the result of the performance being a contract for several years at the Royal Opera. In 1900 he appeared at Covent Garden, and the following year at Vienna.

In 1908 he suddenly left Vienna and went to Paris. He refused all engagements and worked hard with Jean de Reszké, almost entirely changing his method of voice production, making a remarkable improvement in his voice.

Slezak has a very powerful voice of beautiful quality. He is an excellent actor and an adept in the art of costuming and make-up. He is six feet, three inches in height, and broad shouldered, also he is affable and courteous. His greatest rôle is that of *Otello*, in which he is considered superior to any singer since Tamagno. He made his New York début on November 18, 1909, and was successful,—he

*impressed* the audience. Later he appeared in song recitals, and revealed an art which few believed him to possess, for the part of the heroic tenor in opera does not lead one to expect the very true and fine sense of vocal style, in a long and varied programme, such as Mr. Slezak displayed.

The following paragraph is an extract from an account of Slezak's impersonation of *Otello* in which Baklanoff sang *Iago*:

“The great Slezak crowded into insignificance every other figure in the opera. Cassio became but a name, a pin prick, a reason for the Moor's emotions. It is jointly by the distinction of Verdi's and Shakespeare's design, of the necessity of his being, of Slezak's acceptance of that necessity, and finally by dint of his own personal vigor and artistry, that Baklanoff forced his *Iago* into the frame and gave the figure its due proportions.”

Alexander Kubitzky, who appeared during the season of 1909-1910, is described as a tall, firmly built and swarthy Russian singer, accustomed to the stage. He revealed a voice that had less sensuous beauty than penetration of tone, poignant to the emotions rather than caressing to the ear, with the unmistakably nasal



quality common in French and Russian theatres and agreeable to the audiences there,—a voice that plainly sets expression above sweetness. The use of the falsetto in the upper tones, and of vibrato at moments of emotion and intensity, American audiences do not like.

Herman Jadlowker, who first appeared at the Metropolitan Opera-House on January 22, 1910, as *Faust*, was born in Riga in 1879, and was intended by his father for a business career. This was not quite in accordance with the views of the youth, who accordingly fled from Russia. He was then but fifteen years of age. He succeeded in reaching Vienna, where he became a pupil of Gensbacher. He continued his studies in Italy, and eventually got an engagement at Cologne, when he was twenty years of age, taking a small part in an opera of German origin entitled “The Nightwatch of Granada.”

He sang for a short time at Stettin, but first attracted attention by his work at Karlsruhe, where the Emperor William heard him and invited him to sing at the Royal Opera-House in Berlin. A contract for five years ensued. This was followed by a similar contract at Vienna, in which city he had studied under



Gaensbacher at the Conservatoire, through the courtesy of the Grand Duke of Baden.

Jadowker made his American début at the Metropolitan Opera-House as *Faust* on January 22, 1910. "He is thoroughly schooled in the finer ways of music drama," one of the critics wrote, "his well knit and supple figure, and comeliness of face serve him well in romantic parts,—his movements are free, his gestures intelligent and he avoids the trite and empty conventionalities of operatic pose. If he has not exactly personal distinction, he has interesting individuality that plays through an evident sense of operatic character and evident resource in operatic impersonation. Mr. Jadowker made his tones his chief histrionic and characterizing means. He truly sang,—with justice of intonation, with heed of melodic design, with musical shapeliness of phrase, with unforced and intelligently ordered quality of tone. His enunciation is clear,—he is a singing actor."

In the spring of 1912 Jadowker left the Metropolitan Company, having been engaged by the Royal Opera in Berlin. His contract was said to be for five years, and his salary the largest ever paid in Germany to a tenor,—

and yet it was intimated that by the terms of his contract he might be able to return to the Metropolitan Opera-House in 1914. Possibly there may be fewer tenors then than in the season of 1911-1912.

Dimitri Smirnoff was a young Russian tenor who came to the Metropolitan Opera-House in 1910 and remained for two seasons. Mr. Smirnoff had a very good voice and an agreeable presence, but did not seem to rouse any enthusiasm in New York. In reviewing a performance of "La Bohème" the critic wrote: "Mr. Smirnoff's *Rodolfo* was a poet of uneven vocal merit who had but few moments of real lyric beauty. During the opening act it seemed as though the mythical cold of the cheerless garret had really affected the singer's sensitive larynx, since his attack was lamentably uncertain. Later on, however, this adjusted itself and Mr. Smirnoff sang to better advantage."

When he left America in February, 1912, he declared that he had cancelled his contract because the Metropolitan Opera-House was in the hands of the Italians. Inasmuch as Italian singers had declared against the French, and the Germans were aggrieved at both, — if they were not successful, — Smirnoff's accusation

points rather to an impartial administration. But, in any case, the power behind the throne has no nationality but American, and the singers must be satisfactory to the board of directors and to the audiences in order to maintain their positions. Smirnoff, though possessed of some excellent qualities, did not touch the right spot and aroused little interest.

Glenn Hall is one of those singers who, having made a national reputation as a concert and oratorio singer, went into opera. He was educated at Chicago University and soon after being graduated he made his appearance as an oratorio singer, taking part in "Elijah" in Chicago. His success was unusual and he toured with the Thomas Orchestra and with the Boston Festival Orchestra, after which he went abroad and appeared with the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig under Arthur Nickisch. He joined the Metropolitan Opera Company in 1909.

Clarence Whitehill is a native of Marengo, Iowa. He went to Paris to study with Sbriglia and Giraudet, and was engaged first of all to sing *Friere Laurent* at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels. Thence he went to the Opéra Comique in Paris, where, as M. Clarence, he

sang *Nitakantha* in "Lakme," the first American of his sex to sing at the Opéra Comique.

Henry Savage heard him and engaged him for the English Company which he was then managing at the Metropolitan Opera-House, and even paid a forfeit to the management of the opera at Marseilles, at which place Whitehill had recently signed a contract. At the Metropolitan Opera-House he carried off high honors. His voice, however, was too high for the heavy bass rôles, and he returned to Europe for further study, and being determined to sing in Germany he went to Frankfort and studied under Julius Stockhausen. An engagement at Cologne soon followed, and the next season he joined the forces of the Metropolitan Opera-House under Casazza.

Andreas de Segurola was born in Barcelona. His father died when he was but three years of age and his mother when he was six, so he was brought up by his two uncles, one a canon in the church, the other a diplomat, and by them he was intended for the diplomatic service.

He was, however, very anxious for a musical career, and offended his uncles by his desires, for there had been no musical artists in the



family, and such a career was considered beneath the family dignity.

De Segurola accordingly studied law in Barcelona, but in the hotel at which he was staying there was a famous singer, Hariclée Darclee, then at the height of her career, and a member of the Liceo Theatre. He sang for her, and she gave him much encouragement, even asking him to sing at her benefit concert with her. After this performance the manager of the theatre asked him to join the company, which he did at a salary of fifteen hundred francs a month. His début was successful and the following summer he went to South America under Cleofonte Campanini. He sang three seasons at Madrid and Lisbon, and filled engagements in Rome, Palermo, Naples, Parma, and in Argentine, and was for two years a member of the San Carlo Company under Henry Russell.

Mr. De Segurola joined the Metropolitan Company in 1909, and proved to be a valuable member of the organization. At the end of the season of 1911-1912 he was engaged by the M. Sigaldi Company for a season in Mexico, but during the summer he was the leading bass of the Paris season of the Metropolitan Company,



— for a Paris season has been carried on, since Oscar Hammerstein showed the way.

The season of 1910-1911 presented new features in certain respects. For the first time in the history of the Metropolitan Opera-House twenty-two weeks of opera were given. There were one hundred and fifty-two performances, in which thirty operas were heard, and twelve composers represented. There were eighty-six performances of twelve Italian operas, fifty-five performances of twelve German operas, and eleven performances of three French operas.

In addition to this the Philadelphia-Chicago Opera Company appeared on thirteen consecutive Tuesday evenings. The Metropolitan Company did less travelling than usual, only two weeks, — during which they visited Montreal, Cleveland, Cincinnati and Atlanta.

The season was more remarkable for new operas than for new singers, and, probably in view of the fact that audiences had by this time been stirred up to an interest in new things, we began to have “first performance on any stage” announced. This was the case with Englebert Humperdinck’s “Königskinder,” which took place on December 28, and achieved

real success. It was performed eleven times during that season, exceeding by two performances "The Girl of the Golden West" which was the next in order of popularity. The interest in this opera was enhanced by the presence of the composer. The leading rôles were taken by Geraldine Farrar, as *The Goose Girl*, Herman Jadlowker, Otto Goritz, Abramo Didur, Albert Reiss, and Marie Mattfield.

Another novelty was an opera by Paul Dukas, a Frenchman, — "Ariana et Barbe-Bleue," on February 3, in which Miss Farrar also carried off chief honors.

Of the new singers there were few who made more than a moderate success, with the exception of Leon Rothier, a French basso, Basil Ruysdael, an American basso, and William Hinshaw, an American baritone.

Dimitri Smirnoff, the Russian tenor, was received favorably, but his voice was not suited to the large auditorium of the Metropolitan Opera-House, and he returned to his native land, uttering somewhat ungracious remarks about America.

The chief feature of the year, however, was the establishment of what has been called an operatic trust. There were three large com-

panies formed, the Metropolitan, the Chicago-Philadelphia, and the Boston Opera Company. Each of the companies made contracts with some of the great singers, and these great singers were exchanged more or less. For instance, Miss Garden was a member of the Philadelphia-Chicago Company, which took over many of Hammerstein's singers, and she appeared in Boston and in New York. Miss Fremstadt (who won new laurels during that season by her impersonation of *Isolde*) was a member of the Metropolitan Company, but appeared in all four houses. Baklanoff and Constantineau of the Boston Company were exchanged in a similar manner, and there was frequent new interest in the repetitions of operas by the presentation of new principals. This plan works very well at the present stage of the operatic enterprise of this country.

Madame Charles Cahier was formerly Sarah Layton Walker, of Indianapolis. She began her career in America as a church and oratorio singer, and then went to Paris to complete her studies with Jean de Reszké. She made a most successful début at Nice as *Orpheus*, in 1904, in consequence of which she had several flattering offers from various European opera-



MADAME CHARLES CAHIER





houses. On the advice of de Reszké she refused all of them and went to Germany to perfect herself in the Wagner repertory. When she made her German début it was as *Amneris* in "Aida" at Brunswick, and after filling various short engagements in Berlin and other cities she finally accepted an offer from Gustav Mahler to go to the Vienna opera.

Madame Cahier was also selected by Mahler to be soloist in several of the musical festivals which he conducted, and in this capacity sang at Munich, Vienna, Gratz, Mannheim, and other continental cities. She has appeared too at festivals in London and Paris.

In New York she made only two appearances in opera, at the end of the season (1911-1912), as *Azucena* in "Il Trovatore," and as *Amneris* in "Aida," and she sang at one of the Metropolitan Sunday evening concerts. She showed herself to be a singer of admirable qualities, whose vocal resources are of the best, and whose style is finished and broad. Her acting was vivid and emotional.

Lucie Weidt is a native of Vienna. Her voice was discovered when, at the age of sixteen, she sang an aria from "Aida" at a musicale given at her father's house. She made

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such an impression on her audience that she was advised to make a serious study of singing. She went to Jean de Reszké and made her début when only nineteen at the Imperial Opera in Vienna, as *Elizabeth* in "Tannhäuser." After three years she was appointed court singer. In private life Miss Weidt is the Baroness von Urmenyi.

Inga Oerner is a Norwegian soprano who joined the Metropolitan forces in 1911. Her musical career extends over some six or seven years. Her father was a friend of Edouard Grieg, and she studied music under the noted Norwegian composer. She mastered some forty operatic rôles, and was a favorite singer at the concerts held in the Royal Castle, Christiania. In the summer of 1911 Miss Oerner sang at Covent Garden. She had also had an operatic career in her native land.

The most important acquisition to the Metropolitan Opera Company in the season of 1911-1912 was Margarete Matzenaur, who made her début as *Amneris* in "Aida" in November.

Madame Matzenaur is of Hungarian birth, her father was an orchestral conductor and her mother an opera singer, so she received an excellent musical education while still a child.

She plays the piano well and has never had a repetiteur in studying her parts. When she was young she thought that she would be an actress, but her voice developed and made singing more essential. Her début was made at Strassburg, as *Puck* in "Oberon," after which she remained in that theatre for three years and sang many other contralto rôles. After that engagement she went to the Hofoper in Munich and remained a member of that house until coming to America, though she had made various "guest" tours. At Munich she succeeded Olive Fremstadt, and she cherishes the ambition to become, like Miss Fremstadt, a dramatic soprano, in fact Miss Fremstadt is said to have left Munich in order to get away from contralto rôles.

Madame Matzenaur has sung *Hérodiad* in "Salomé," *Klytemnestra* in "Elektra," and has learned the part of the *Marschallin*, in "Der Rosenkavalier."

At Bayreuth Madame Matzenaur appeared as *Waltraute*, one of the Rhine Daughters, and as one of the Norns in "Götterdämmerung," and she expected to be engaged to sing *Kundry* in 1912. But another was selected, and Madame Matzenaur, by singing the part at the Met-

ropolitan Opera-House in an emergency, practically severed her connection with Bayreuth. The reason given at Bayreuth for not engaging her was "lack of time for rehearsal," but this excuse was proved absurd by the fact that Madame Matzenaur, taking Miss Fremstadt's place, sang the part without an orchestral rehearsal, and did it with an intelligence that proclaimed her a very great artist, and what is also quite remarkable, she pronounced every word so that it was distinctly understood. Madame Matzenaur is, in fact, distinguished for mastery of languages. She speaks English without a trace of continental accent, just as a cultivated English woman speaks, although she has never spent much time in studying it, and has spent only a few weeks in England. She also speaks Italian fluently and French, besides Hungarian.

At the end of the Metropolitan season in 1912 she went to the Stadt Theatre at Hamburg, but was engaged for a portion of each of the two following seasons for America.

During her American engagement Madame Matzenaur distinguished herself not only by her singing of *Kundry*, but also by her interpretation of the parts of *Brünnhilde* in "Wal-





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MARGARETE MATZENAUR





küre," as *Orfeo* in Gluck's opera, and as *Bran-gaene*, on which occasion one of the papers declared: "Madame Matzenaur made her hearers realize that for the first time since the days of Marianne Brandt, the Metropolitan had a *Bran-gaene* worthy of that rôle. A tragic actress of intense force and passion, Madame Matzenaur possesses in addition, a voice so rich and sonorous, and capable of such infinite gradations of color and emotional depiction that the combination forms an irresistible whole and casts a magic spell over her hearers. She is the greatest contralto heard in New York opera since Madame Schumann-Heink left Broadway for wider fields in concert."

In Munich Madame Matzenaur married Ernst Preuse in 1902. Preuse had been one of her teachers, and her divorce from him was one of the reasons why she left Munich and came to America. In July, 1912, an announcement was made of her engagement to Signor Fontana-Ferrari, an Italian tenor, of La Scala.

Heinrich Hensel, who was a newcomer at the Metropolitan Opera-House in 1911, began his operatic career in 1907 as a lyric tenor, but his voice developed into a dramatic tenor, after which he went to the Court Theatre at Wies-

baden and became an object of especial interest to the Emperor of Germany.

Hensel is the son of a wealthy manufacturer, and was destined to enter the army as an officer after he had finished his term of service in the cavalry at Carlsruhe. He was educated at his father's home in Pfalz. After singing in various amateur affairs he became seriously interested and placed himself under the tuition of Gustav Walter, a former tenor of the Vienna opera. He then took further lessons under Herman Rosenberg, and finally he studied with Emmerich in Milan. He made his début at Freiburg, Baden, as *Stradella* in 1897, and obtained a three years' contract at that theatre. For six years he sang operas of the old school, and then entered by degrees into the modern works, taking such parts as *Turiddu* in "Cavalleria Rusticana" and *Canio* in "Il Pagliacci."

After an engagement at Frankfort he went to Wiesbaden where he entered upon the heroic repertory, singing *Siegmond* and *Siegfried*, *Lohengrin*, and *Walter von Stolzing*.

Hensel was chosen by Siegfried Wagner, while singing at Carlsruhe, to create the tenor part in his opera "Bandietrich," and as a re-

sult of that engagement he sang *Parsifal* at Bayreuth.

Mr. Hensel made his American début at the Metropolitan Opera-House early in 1912, when he appeared as *Lohengrin*. "In appearance Mr. Hensel is one of the most impressive *Lohengrins* seen at the Metropolitan in some time," says one account. "He is tall, handsome and well built, and it did not require the words of the other personages in the drama to convince one that the knight was a really heroic individual. . . . His acting pleased, though the full extent of his histrionic ability remains to be determined. . . . Mr. Hensel's voice, a pure tenor, is distinguished especially by its youthful freshness and purity of quality. Strangely enough, it impresses one as of a lyric rather than a truly dramatic cast. . . . He has no need to force his tones for they are resonant and well produced and will consequently carry to perfection when normally emitted. . . . One of the most delightful features of Mr. Hensel's work is the beautiful clarity of his enunciation, which makes every word thoroughly comprehensible even to the most distant listener."

Shortly afterwards Mr. Hensel made an appearance as *Siegfried*, as substitute for Carl

Burrian, who was indisposed. On this occasion also his efforts were crowned with success. The following account appeared in one of the papers :

“ From his first appearance to the final note of the love scene between *Siegfried* and the awakened *Brünnhilde* at the close of the opera, it might truthfully be said, and this, too, with all due respect to the whole cast, that Heinrich Hensel dominated the stage and quickly brought the audience to realize that in voice and appearance one of the greatest *Siegfrieds* known to New York opera habitues was on the boards.

“ This was Mr. Hensel’s initial *Siegfried* appearance here, and let it be recorded that another triumph has been added to his list at the Metropolitan Opera-House. At the close of each act the audience insisted upon bringing the magnificent artist before the curtain many times to bow acknowledgment to the plaudits.

“ Every scene was invested with its full degree of significance, and not a light or shade was missed by Hensel, who seemed to be the very embodiment of the forest hero. The song at the forge was delivered with stirring eloquence; the encounter with *Fafner*, as the dragon, was a masterpiece of dramatic delivery



and acting; the scene with *Wotan* in the last act, and the final love episode with *Brünnhilde* were impressive in the extreme. The present writer overheard a veteran opera attendant remark enthusiastically after Hensel had been called before the curtain about a dozen times following the first act: 'The greatest and handsomest *Siegfried* since Alvary.' "

Lambert Murphy, a tenor who began his operatic experience at the Metropolitan Opera-House in the season of 1911-1912, is a native of Springfield, Mass. As a boy he was a church singer, and he continued in that work until he secured his engagement at the Metropolitan Opera-House. In 1904 he entered Harvard University, and was at that time a member of the quartet of the Park St. Congregational church in Boston. Each year he was sought by other churches and eventually he sang in the New Old South church, from which place he went to St. Bartholomew's in New York. During his college career he was a member of all the musical organizations, and was in demand for concert engagements. He coached for oratorio under Emil Mollenhaur.

Mr. Murphy had no idea of entering the musical profession until the end of his college career.

He had simply studied singing under Thomas L. Cushman, a teacher of Springfield and Boston.

Mr. Murphy has a pure tenor voice of beautiful quality. He has never had to seek professional engagements,—they have been urged upon him. He was asked by Riccardo Martin, who met him at a mutual friend's house, to sing for Mr. Gatti-Casazza, and he became a member of the company without any preliminary operatic experience, and without leaving the United States for study or training of any kind. He takes small parts in the opera and has, so far, been warmly commended for his work.

Herman Weil, who also came to the Metropolitan Opera-House in 1911, is a young man in his early prime. He is said to have been discovered by Siegfried Wagner, who first heard him as *Hans Sachs* at the Royal Opera-House in Stuttgart in 1910. Weil's whole life has been passed in Stuttgart, where he had been a student at the Conservatory. His striking qualities as an artist are the power of his delivery and the rich amplitude of his voice. During his student days Weil fell in love with a fellow student and married her shortly after making his début.

Putnam Griswold was born in Minneapolis, spent the early part of his life in California, and, aided by some Californian friends, went abroad to study singing. His first engagement was at the Municipal Opera at Frankfurt-on-the-Main. Six months later he began a tour in America singing the part of *Gurnemanz* in Henry M. Savage's production of "*Parsifal*." During this tour he sang that rôle one hundred and sixteen times, and his success was so great that he secured a contract at the Berlin Royal Opera as principal basso, for six years.

At the Metropolitan Opera-House Mr. Griswold has distinguished himself in Wagnerian rôles. His *King Mark* was called a magnificent presentation, physically and vocally. He made every moment of the usually tedious second act finale resolve itself into real music drama.

As *Wotan* the following account was given of him:

"Putnam Griswold was a stately *Wotan*, and his glorious bass voice rolled out over the big audience with organ-like resonance. Not only is Mr. Griswold a superb vocalist, but he also is an actor of unusual capacity as well. His mocking laughter at *Mime* was gruesome and thrilling in the extreme. The scene of the

questions in the first act was made most dramatically impressive by Mr. Griswold, as was also the scene at the cave of the dragon. He was superb, too, in the episodes between *Erda* and *Siegfried*. Griswold is a fine artist and a rich prize for any great opera-house to possess."

For many years the nation has been looking for an American Grand Opera. Since the days of W. H. Fry there have been several attempts to produce grand opera written by Americans, both in this country and abroad. Damrosch's "Scarlet Letter" was an opera on an American subject. Nevin's "Poia," produced in Germany some few years ago, was an Indian story and therefore more like what the ideal American opera should be. Louis A. Coerne's "Zenobia," produced in Berlin, was American in that the composer was educated in and a resident of America. The most successful American opera is "The Girl of the Golden West," an American story set to music by an Italian, and most successfully sung by a polyglot company, which included Emmy Destinn, Amato, etc. Victor Herbert's "Natoma," mentioned elsewhere, is founded on an Indian story. Horatio Parker has sought out a story



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PUTNAM GRISWOLD





of ancient Britain. In all the discussions that have taken place regarding the expected American opera it has not yet been clearly defined what constitutes an American opera. Whether the story must be American in subject, written by an American, as well as the music, or whether it is necessary only that the composer should be an American. In reviewing operas of other nations we conclude that the only essential is that the composer should be a native American. We have, for instance, among Italian operas, "*Lucia di Lammermoor*," a story by Sir Walter Scott, set to music by an Italian; we have "*Rigoletto*," a story by a Frenchman, set to music by an Italian; we have "*Madame Butterfly*," a story by an American about the Japanese, set to music by an Italian, and one could continue indefinitely.

In regard to an American opera it remains a fact that no American composer has yet reached the point of writing an opera containing the essential qualities. Mr. Converse in "*The Pipe of Desire* " and "*The Sacrifice* " showed some excellent qualities, but fell short of success. Professor Paine's "*Azara* " was considered to be an excellent work, but it was never produced.

It is generally conceded that Prof. Parker's opera contains much that is of great merit. Perhaps too much advance advertising did more to spoil its chances than anything else. Too much advance advertising is accountable for many failures in America. Public expectation is raised too high, or expects something entirely different from that which is presented, and failure ensues.

In regard to operas, we can find, if we search through operatic history, that many of the most successful operas were unpopular at first. Some were re-written, or improved, others were persistently pushed, until the people began to feel that they could not do without them.

Under the circumstances it may be well to reproduce here a keen analysis of the opera which was published in the *Boston Herald* immediately after the production of "Mona:"

"The characters and the posture of circumstances, the interplay of emotions are evolved with strong imagination. Their development is the result of a keen psychological analysis. The book is written with a fine, often a beautiful, literary skill. It is the work of a poet of real gift and imagination, and it is couched in the diction of true poetry. It is safe to say that

very few operatic librettos in English have had the distinction from a literary point of view that this has.

“ But as an operatic libretto Mr. Hooker’s book has faults. It is undramatic and it has little fitness for development and elucidation by music. To begin with, too little happens upon the stage for long stretches of time together. There is too much discussion of a political and a religious nature, too much narrative of what has happened and is expected to happen and too little that actually does happen.

“ Prof. Parker’s musical embodiment of this operatic book is unquestionably a work of remarkable musicianship. But it is greatly to be feared that on the whole it will be found so bleak and austere in its quality as to meet with little favor from even the musical public. It has many elements of beauty, strength and originality. But it suffers from the trouble that lies at the bottom of Mr. Hooker’s book, that it is not, in the true sense of the word, dramatic—it is not able to keep and hold the listener’s attention as the interpretation of long and sustained action upon the stage.

“ It is profoundly serious music; it makes

not the slightest concession to popularity. With very few exceptions it keeps a stern and unyielding mood from the beginning to the end. There are no lascivious pleatings of the ear in 'Mona,' and this unbending severity is something that burdens even the most sympathetic listener.

"The impression of 'Mona' that will first prevail is that of a lack of melodic flow. Its vindication from this charge, if vindication there be, must be left to time.

"There are snatches of melodic form here and there, but they are fugitive — they are not allowed to reach development. One of the most pleasing episodes of the opera is the opening scene in the second act, in which *Nial* is seen at the altar in the forest dancing with his shadow, speculating on the shadowy nature of souls and communing with the birds. Here are melodic grace, insinuating rhythms, seductive harmonies and a suggestion of naiveté."

An excellent review of the Metropolitan Opera season of 1911-1912 appeared in *Musical America*. From it the essential points are taken and reproduced, by permission:

"At the opening of the New York opera season which has just ended the impression was



widespread and deep rooted that it must prove more or less of an anti-climax by contrast with the brilliancy of the preceding one. This sentiment was grounded mainly on the character of the new productions announced. There was nothing which promised to approximate in importance — that is, for the average run of operagoers — the pompous launching of the ‘Girl of the Golden West,’ with Puccini at hand in the flesh as an additional ornament to the occasion. There was no world *première* of any other foreign work — with or without the helping hand of its composer — that would compensate for the glories of the ‘Königskinder.’ Nothing that was promised with any degree of definiteness appeared of a nature to provoke undue excitement, except, perhaps, the home-made ‘Mona.’

“Thuille’s ‘Lobetanz’ was brought out less than a week after the first night of the season, thereby establishing something of a record for enterprise and celerity of action.

“‘Lobetanz,’ which Alfred Hertz on his arrival from Europe last Fall declared to be a second ‘Königskinder,’ proved to be nothing of the kind. It had two acts of mildly pretty music and a third that had originality and

strength through its grotesque macabre quality. But the plot was inane and though the management staged it lavishly and provided it with an unsurpassable cast it never really succeeded in arousing public interest. The second novelty was Wolf-Ferrari's 'Le Donne Curiose,' the composer himself being present for several performances. The opera aroused much more enthusiasm among certain of the critics than among the public at large. It was a cleverly fashioned score in many ways. The leading defect of the work was the puerile character of its humor, which was further aggravated by the fact that the piece was drawn out to an unconscionable length and that whatever sparkle may have been in the lines was necessarily lost to those unfamiliar with Italian.

“Leo Blech's one act 'Versiegelt' came next on the list. Its brevity made it useful for double-bill purposes and it had genuine, if not very original, musical charm and straightforward, hearty comedy which, unlike 'Le Donne Curiose,' did not pall by being spread out too thin.

“By far the most anxiously awaited feature of the season was the \$10,000 prize opera, Horatio Parker's 'Mona.' It must be regarded,

among other things, as the Metropolitan's reply to the question of opera in English during the year. One cannot accord 'Mona' the distinction of genuine success, though it had certain positive and negative merits. Brian Hooker's libretto was a work of exceptional poetic beauty and nobility of theme and style of treatment, though frequently too slow of action and too subtly psychologic for operatic purposes. Nevertheless the lavish praise bestowed on it should serve to point out to American librettists of the future the path they must travel. Professor Parker's music had the virtues of profound scholarship if not real musical inspiration. Besides there were many things in it that betrayed the hand of the novice at operatic craftsmanship. It called for commendation for its manifest sincerity and well-defined character but for reproach on account of the consistent avoidance of the lyrical, emotional and the sensuously beautiful. In many ways 'Mona' was a profound object lesson to American composers, for its defects showed them very plainly some of the salient elements that stand in the way of operatic success. But even though the chances for 'Mona's' existence on its own merits are small, its influence as an encourage-

ment to American opera will still be looked upon as considerable.

“ The Wagnerian performances were almost always well patronized and, as has been the case for years, Wagner led all other composers in the number of representations he received. Unfortunately only a single cycle of the ‘ Nibelung’s Ring ’ was given, though the enormous size of the audiences and the high pitch of enthusiasm at these were assuredly such as to have justified repetitions of the tetralogy. The departure of Mr. Burrian shortly after left the Metropolitan without a *Siegfried* and forestalled the possibility of another cycle or of any further separate performances of ‘ Siegfried,’ ‘ Götterdämmerung ’ or even ‘ Tristan und Isolde.’ ‘ Parsifal,’ of course, had its three or four usual holiday matinées.

“ ‘ Königskinder,’ the triumph of the preceding year, held its own throughout this winter and the German répertoire was further enlarged (temporarily, at least) by ‘ Lobetanz ’ and ‘ Versiegelt,’ which have just been mentioned. The Italian ‘ Girl of the Golden West ’ was still found worthy of a good number of hearings. For the rest the Italian list of operas remained very much what it has been. Puccini



led even Verdi, and one was amazed if two weeks passed without a regular performance or a special *matinée* of 'Bohème,' which was worked ceaselessly throughout the season. Thanks to the enterprise of Messrs. Gatti-Casazza and Toscanini Verdi's 'Otello' has at last become a fixture in the *répertoire*. The 'double bill' of 'Cavalleria' and 'Pagliacci,' which seems as eternal as the heavens themselves, was pleasantly varied at times when 'Hänsel und Gretel' or 'Versiegelt' was substituted for one or the other of its component parts. But it drew best when given in its time-honored integrity, provided Caruso were in the cast.

"Three French operas were given — Gounod's 'Faust,' Dukas's 'Ariane et Barbe-Bleue' and Massenet's 'Manon' — the last only as a makeshift, and that at the tail end of the year. Gluck's 'Armide,' though written to a French text, is yet the work of a German. The 'Faust' performances were often so slipshod as to call for reproof. They were fairly pitchforked on the stage and the score entrusted to a not over-efficient conductor. Altogether French opera fared about as badly at the Metropolitan as it had a year earlier. There was no French tenor at the Metropolitan



and no first class French soprano, though the latter deficiency was remedied by the work of Geraldine Farrar.

“ For the few ‘ Rigolettos ’ and ‘ Traviatas ’ the management availed itself of the brief visits of Mme. Tetrazzini and Mme. de Pasquali. The Gluck operas, ‘ Armide ’ and ‘ Orfeo,’ so admirably mounted and superbly sung, continued deservedly to enjoy popular support and sympathy. Mr. Toscanini’s noble zeal seems really to have turned ‘ Armide ’ from failure to success.

“ The opening performance of the season brought to the notice of the New York public one of the most consummate artists it has ever been privileged to applaud. This was Margarete Matzenaur, the German contralto, who, by her superb voice and her rare intelligence, musicianship, temperamental qualities and dramatic force, scored one of the most emphatic successes ever attained by a contralto at the Metropolitan. Her *Kundry* in ‘ Parsifal,’ her *Orfeo* and her *Ortrud* were impersonations of superlative excellence. Though a true contralto, Mme. Matzenaur aspired occasionally to soprano parts and even won deep admiration by her portrayal of *Brünnhilde* in ‘ Walküre,’

Had Mr. Gatti-Casazza done nothing more than to import this singer he would still have deserved no end of thanks.

“ At the same time as Mme. Matzenaur came an English mezzo-soprano, Theodora Orridge. She failed, however, to create an impression and returned to Europe after a few performances. Early in April came the American contralto, Mme. Charles Cahier from Vienna for the sake of two performances. She proved an interesting artist, one whom it would doubtless be pleasant to hear in a wider variety of rôles. There was the usual dearth of French and Italian contraltos.

“ The leading sopranos were, as usual, Mmes. Destinn, Farrar, Gadske, Fremstadt, Rappold, Gluck and Alten. For the mezzo parts there were the trusty standbys Mattfeld, Fornia, Wickham. As was the case with the contraltos there was no leading Italian soprano. For the latter, however, there was little need, in view of the diversity of the talents of Mmes. Destinn, Farrar, Gadske and Fremstadt.

“ Aside from Caruso there were no leading Italian tenors, the remainder of the tenor contingent including Messrs. Martin, Jadowker,

Jörn, Slezak, Burrian and Hensel. The last was a newcomer. He sang infrequently, the sum total of his work consisting of one or two 'Lohengrin' performances, appearances as *Siegmond* and *Siegfried* and a few Sunday night concerts. The impression he produced was not of the indelible kind. Mr. Jadlowker was found to have improved immensely since his earlier appearances here, but by a previous contract was obliged to return to the Berlin Opera, just as his popularity here was in marked ascendancy. European contracts also took Carl Burrian away from the Metropolitan in February, thus leaving that institution without that very necessary adjunct, a German heroic tenor. The attempt to remedy the deficiency by impressing the eminently lyric-voiced Carl Jörn into the ranks of *Siegmonds* and *Parsifals* did not bring about the most satisfying results.

"The baritone wing of the company was materially strengthened by the American, Putnam Griswold, brought home from the Berlin Royal Opera. From every standpoint this artist showed himself to be of the highest rank. Mr. Weil was a pleasing singer and fairly good actor, but he lacked the breadth, authority and

artistic stature for some of the great rôles he was called upon to assume. Neither his *Wotan* nor his *Sachs* was particularly convincing. His best work was done as *Telramund* and as the *Burgomaster* in 'Versiegelt.' Mr. Amato maintained the hold he has always exercised on his audiences. His is a magnificent voice and he is a true artist. Mr. Gilly enjoyed greater opportunities than in the past and incidentally showed himself more than worthy of them, while Mr. Goritz and naturally also Mr. Reiss, the little tenor, continued to be the greatest funmakers in the company.

"The choral forces were again of preëminent excellence and the difficult ensembles in 'Lohengrin,' 'Meistersinger,' 'Götterdämmerung' and 'Parsifal' were almost invariably sung with thrilling effect. Scenic settings and stage management in the newest productions never failed to awaken unbounded admiration.

"Taken on the whole, though, the season has been one which may be observed with a sense of gratification. Mr. Gatti-Casazza has shown the same zeal, sincerity and earnestness as in former years, the same disposition to attain artistic efficiency as in the past.



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“ A review of the operatic year in New York would not be complete without a mention, at least, of the five weekly visits of the Chicago company, beginning on February 13. It is to this organization that New Yorkers owe their thanks for a good part of their French opera this year. The company brought with it ‘Carmen,’ the ‘Juggler,’ ‘Thaïs,’ the new and highly pleasing ‘Cendrillon’ of Massenet, and Wolf-Ferrari’s new ‘Jewels of the Madonna.’ The attendance was very large and the artistic level of these performances was almost invariably high.

“ The season provided a grand total of thirty-four different operas and 146 performances, of which eleven performances were double-bills. There were three special performances by the Russian Ballet and one of the Sunday night concerts was devoted to a worthy production of Wolf-Ferrari’s beautiful oratorio, ‘La Vita Nuova,’ and another to that ancient opera, Monteverdi’s ‘Orfeo,’ given in concert form.

“ In Brooklyn the Metropolitan gave seventeen operas (sixteen performances). Philadelphia had nine visits from the Metropolitan, in which ten operas were heard.”



At the close of the season of 1911-1912 the reviews generally praised Mr. Gatti-Casazza, especially in regard to his policy as to German opera. When he took charge of the opera-house it was assumed that being an Italian, he would favor Italian opera, and that German opera would be slighted. It did not take long to convince even the most skeptical that Mr. Gatti-Casazza was a more staunch supporter of German opera than either Conried or Grau, both of whom were native Germans.

In New York for many years German opera meant Wagner, but under the recent management the classification has been extended. Not only have there been most excellent performances of Wagner, but works of other German composers, as may be seen in the foregoing reviews, have been given a place in the Metropolitan repertoire,—and Gluck has been revived in sumptuous style.

On the other hand, the French composers were more or less neglected, but the reasons for this were not difficult to discover. Hammerstein had done much with French opera, and Hammerstein's company went chiefly to Chicago. On the whole, the past two years ap-

pear to have given more satisfaction to the Metropolitan Opera-House audiences than previous seasons, and, as competition increases the opera will improve everywhere.

## CHAPTER V

### THE BOSTON OPERA - HOUSE UNDER HENRY RUSSELL

THE idea of establishing grand opera on a permanent basis in Boston started when the San Carlo Company, of which Henry Russell was the director, gave a season at the Majestic Theatre in the spring of 1906. It grew when, during the next season, no time for rehearsals could be secured at the theatre, and Mr. Russell borrowed Jordan Hall at the New England Conservatory for rehearsal purposes. The matter of opera in Boston was discussed by Mr. Russell and Mr. Flanders, manager of the New England Conservatory. Mr. Eben Jordan became interested, has been the mainstay of the enterprise, building the opera-house, and has backed the operatic enterprise until it could become self-supporting.

The first season opened on November the eighth, 1908, with "La Gioconda." Madame Lillian Nordica, at one time a student at the Conservatory, sang the title rôle. Madame

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Louise Homer, also in her early days a student at the Conservatory, Madame Meitschek, Florencio Constantineau, George Baklanoff, José Mardones, A. Pulcini and C. Stroesco completing the cast.

On the second night "Aida" was given with Mesdames Boninsegna, Claessens, Bettina Freeman, Lehon, and Francis Archambault.

The next production was "Lakmé," with Lydia Lipkowska, Bettina Freeman, Evelyn Parnell, Virginia Pierce, Mabel Stanaway, Paul Bourrillon, Nivette, and Stroesco.

The fourth production was "La Bohème" with Alice Neilsen, Levicka, Constantineau, Tavecchia and Huddy.

During the first season of the Boston opera twenty-one operas were mounted,—fifteen Italian, four French, and one German, and the season lasted fifteen weeks. The company also made various excursions to other cities. At the end of the regular season both the Metropolitan and the Manhattan Companies appeared at the same time in Boston, the Metropolitan at the Opera-House, and the Manhattan at the Boston Theatre. The chief attraction of the Manhattan Company was a performance of the gruesome opera "Elektra."

Alice Nielsen, whose name in private life is Mrs. Nentwig, has had, perhaps, the most varied career that any singer on the grand opera stage to-day has experienced. A native of Nashville, Tennessee, while still a mere child her parents moved to San Francisco, wheré her musical education began. Beginning a career in her teens, singing at the famous old Tivoli (of many memories), she joined the famous Bostonians as prima donna, and in a very short time she was at the head of her own opera company, touring this country. Going to Europe, she decided to devote herself to grand opera, relinquishing the fame and fortune that had come to her in the light opera field, and beginning all over again as a student.

After study to gain repertoire, her operatic début was made in Italy with immediate success. Engagements at all of the important opera-houses of Europe followed, and in 1904 she appeared at Covent Garden, London, together with Melba, Destinn, Caruso and others, appearing in "Don Giovanni," the great presentation in which Destinn made her London début. Especially has she won fame as *Mimi* in "La Bohème," having sung that rôle to the *Rodolfo* of Caruso many times. She has been



avored many times by "Command" performances at Buckingham Palace, Windsor and other Royal residences during her several seasons in opera in London.

When Miss Neilsen first appeared in grand opera in her native land she was prima donna of the San Carlo Opera Company, which had been organized by Henry Russell, and gave a series of performances in New Orleans, visiting other cities also, later in the season. This was in 1906. She remained with the San Carlo Company during its seasons until the establishment of the Boston Opera, with which she sang two seasons. After 1911 Miss Neilsen was only a visiting artist of the Boston Company but sang with the Metropolitan Company also. She created the leading rôle in "The Sacrifice" when it was produced.

Miss Neilsen has particularly distinguished herself as a singer of Mozart.

The following article appeared in the *Boston Transcript*, under date of February 10, 1912, describing Miss Neilsen's truly Mozartian singing:

"There is no opportunity of 'faking' in Mozart; every carelessness and shoddiness yells its sin to the world and requires equal pro-



Photograph by — MATZENE — Chicago  
ALICE NEILSEN



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portions of voice, natural talent, dramatic imagination, every day common sense and tireless industry. These, but above all these, conscience, the every day variety of working conscience.

“ Probably it is this conscience that makes Miss Alice Neilsen’s singing of Mozart so thorough and so authoritative. No amount of original talent or artistic education could have done it alone. An aria like the ‘Voi che sapete,’ from ‘Figaro,’ demands too much of everything a singer has to be achieved by any esoteric or mystic quality. In the clear light of day, alike to the intellect and to the emotions, her singing stood the test. She had what every Mozart aria demands; first of all, pure voice; not so much natural voice or vocal bigness, but rather a high percentage of efficiency in the use of the voice one has. Then there was a clear realization of form, of mere decorative beauty. Next a conception of this form as organic, with each part, down to the smallest grace-note, necessary and individual. Along with this an instinctive feeling for the drama and emotion of it. And finally, after, and not before these other qualities, all that makes any one of Mozart’s arias distinct from every other one,

and all the subtlety and finesse and personal charm which a singer can give to them — if she is rich enough. Perhaps it is the recognition of all these things that makes up the necessary conscience which etymologically means merely ‘complete knowing.’ Miss Nielsen certainly has all of them. She can make each aria Mozartian, individual and finally her own personal property. She has the disciplined taste that can retard a phrase just enough to emphasize it but not so much as to disturb its organic relation. She has the fine sense that can prepare an ending so as to make the closing cadence enchanting in its sweetness and finality. The vocal Mozart is not often heard in these parts, but if he ever takes hold it will mean trouble, or more probably sincere joy for the opera-house.”

Lydia Lipkowska was born on the estate of her father, in the province of Poltava, Southern Russia. After graduating from the girls’ high school at the age of seventeen, she decided to devote herself to an artistic career, and entered the Conservatory at St. Petersburg, notwithstanding the opposition of her parents. She became the pupil of Russia’s most famous singing teacher, Madame Iretzka, and in two years she made her début in the part of *Gilda* in “*Rigo-*



letto," at the Imperial Theatre in St. Petersburg.

Her success was instantaneous, and she was a reigning favorite of the opera-goers of the Russian capital for three years, and was called affectionately by them, "La Petite." Then she decided to seek new honors in foreign lands, and when she made her *début* in the spring of 1909 at the Paris Chatelet and Opéra Comique, the Parisians, as the Russians had previously, decided that Madame Lipkowska possessed the rare combination of an admirable coloratura voice and unusual histrionic talent. It was in Paris that Mr. Russell heard and engaged her.

Madame Lipkowska made her first American appearance at the Boston Opera-House in November, 1909, and became a great favorite. It is even recorded that a hotel proprietor wounded her susceptibilities by naming a dish after her, intending to do her great honor. At the end of the season of 1910-1911 Madame Lipkowska left the Boston Opera Company and went to New York. She has in fact, "gone the round" of the American Opera-Houses.

The following story which was published has the merit of being romantic, even though it may not be strictly accurate:

“ Lydia Lipkowska, who was one of the leading members of the Boston Opera Company during its first two seasons, was a Russian of humble origin. She was a street singer when, chanting a Russian folk song under the window of a wealthy and titled Russian, her voice pleased him so much that he sent a servant to bring her into the house. He learned her story and decided that her talents should be cultivated. This ended her career in the line of street singing, and after proper study she was brought out at the Imperial Opera-House in St. Petersburg where she made a distinct success.”

Lydia Lipkowska was small and slight, and in happy contrast to the bulk and maturity of many coloratura singers. Her face and body were delicately molded and a little frail in appearance. She had lightness, swiftness and grace of youth and in all that she did disclosed quick sensibility, individual accent and clear charm. She interested, she pleased in herself as well as by what her singing and acting accomplished. Delicate in all she is and does without a hint of mincing elegance. Thus was she described by Mr. H. T. Parker, who continued: “ Essentially a light, pliant, delicate



LYDIA LIPKOWSKA



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voice readily susceptible to the agility that the ornaments of song in the older Italian operas demand, Miss Lipkowska is certainly capable of sustained and expressive song. The quality, however, that particularly distinguishes her tones is the delicate and subtle variety of color that she gives them. Artistry of delicate shadings, of subtle distinctions, of fine sensibilities that are in her. Her voice seemed less a brilliant voice than a tender, melancholy, wistful voice attuned to sentiment and not to display. Yet it has soft warmth. Her acting disclosed similar characteristics, — light, clear, softly touched with mood and trait, subtle even in some of its illusions, — a new and exotic personality."

Miss Lipkowska excelled in her interpretation of *Lakmé*, was considered very good in "La Traviata," and dainty in "Il Barbiere," but her interpretation of *Manon* was considered mistaken. She remained with the Boston Opera Company for two seasons.

Fely Dereyne was born in Marseilles, France, and prepared for her career in her native city, making her début there also in Gounod's "Mireille." She was then engaged for the winter season at Nice, and sang during the following



summer at Vichy. At the conclusion of this season she appeared in most of the principal opera-houses in France. During this time Henry Russell heard her and engaged her for the San Carlo Company, which he was then forming. She made her first American appearances with that company in New Orleans, and sang in Boston in April, 1907, as *Musetta* in Puccini's "La Bohème."

In the spring of 1908 Miss Dereyne went to Covent Garden, where she sang during two seasons. She also made a tour of Brazil and sang in Buenos Ayres. Then she joined the Metropolitan Company. She has also been a valuable member of the Boston Opera Company, and of the Montreal Opera Company. In Montreal she was selected to sing the title rôle in Charpentier's "Louise" at its first performance in that city. She has had good success in "Tosca," "Faust," "Mignon," "Manon" and "Bohème."

Bettina Freeman was born in Boston in 1889. Her mother is French and her father an American of German descent. She was educated in the public schools and began to take lessons on the piano at the age of thirteen, her teacher being Madame de Berg Lofgren, who began to



FELY DEREYNE



teach her singing also when she was sixteen. When the Boston Opera enterprise was launched Madame Lofgren took her young pupil to the opera school, and after some coaching with Minetti and Conti, Miss Freeman made her début as *Siebel* in "Faust," and sang with the Boston Opera Company for one season. Seeking an opportunity for larger parts she went to New York where she was engaged for the Quinlan Opera Company, and made a tour through England and Scotland, singing leading parts, — *Madame Butterfly*, *Micaela*, *Gretel*, and she even sang *Elizabeth* in "Tannhäuser," a rôle considered much too taxing for a young singer. Her voice is of mezzo-soprano quality with an unusual range.

Miss Freeman had a rather unusual experience, for in 1907 being consumed with the desire to study abroad, she went to Paris, took three or four lessons, was taken ill, and returned to Boston in time to resume her lessons, in the fall, with Madame Lofgren. She thus made her operatic début with practically no European study or experience.

Emma Hoffmann is a native of Chicago, who, after preparatory work in Chicago, went abroad to study for opera. She made her début at the

San Carlo Opera-House in Naples in "Aida," and is said to have aroused such interest that she was hailed as the greatest dramatic soprano of the day. Notwithstanding this handicap she appeared with success in Turin and other cities, and enjoyed the distinction of creating the soprano rôle in Goldmark's new opera, "Wintermarchen," at the Regis Theatre, Turin, on which occasion Mr. Goldmark complimented her highly and requested her to learn the part in German in order to sing it at Vienna.

Although she is said to have received offers from numerous European houses, she signed a contract with Henry Russell and was one of the Boston Opera Company during its first season. She afterwards joined the Chicago Company.

Margaret Banks, of Los Angeles, Cal., went to Italy in 1907, and returned two years later an accepted prima donna, having a three years' contract with the Boston Opera Company, which would permit her also to sing at the Metropolitan Opera-House. Miss Banks's only teacher, until she went abroad, was her mother. In Italy she sang under the name of Margherita Namara. She made her début in "Faust." She was afterwards engaged by the Schuberts to appear in comic opera.





JESKA SWARTZ



Another young soprano singer brought forward during the first season of the Boston Opera was Evelyn Parnell, a pupil of Madame Meysenheim of New York. She was known in Boston, her home city, as a church singer. After the Boston season she went abroad and has been singing successfully in opera in Milan, Pavia, Venice, etc.

Jeska Swartz was born in Albany, New York, and her voice attracted attention when she was a mere child. Early in her 'teens she went to Boston and studied at the New England Conservatory under Charles A. White. During her under-graduate course at the Conservatory she was engaged as soloist with the Boston Festival Orchestra in a tour of the Eastern States. She also was contralto soloist at several churches, the latest being the Piedmont church in Worcester.

Miss Swartz was one of the young singers taken in to the Boston Opera Company at its beginning, and has remained with the company ever since. In 1911 she went to London and made her début at Covent Garden where she was very favorably received. During the season of 1911-1912 Miss Swartz and Miss Fisher made a distinct success of *Hänsel* and *Gretel*.

Maria Claessens, who has been a member of the Boston Company from its beginning, is a native of Brussels, and was educated at the Conservatory in her native city. She then went to the Conservatory at Barcelona in Spain and made her first appearance on the operatic stage at the Liceo Teatro in that city, in Donizetti's "La Favorita." She then toured the principal cities of Portugal and Italy, and visited Argentina, Chili and Mexico.

Madame Claessens was a member of the San Carlo Company and with it made her first appearance in Boston in 1907. She is a contralto, and a useful member of the company. Though not an inspiring singer she is always adequate.

Anna Meitschek, who also was one of the first members of the Boston Company, is a Russian contralto with a voice so deep that she has even sung baritone airs. It is related of her that once, at the fair at Nighni Novgorod, where a performance of Rubinstein's opera the "Demon" was to be given, the baritone to whom the title rôle had been assigned was taken ill and Madame Meitschek sang the part and saved the performance. She is a native of St. Petersburg and prepared for her operatic career at the Imperial Conservatory. Be-

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fore singing in opera she appeared in concert in France. Madame Meitschek became a member of the Metropolitan Company. Her interpretation of the *Countess* in "Pique Dame," is one of the foundation stones of her reputation in Europe. She is a thorough artist, and brought individuality into her representation that makes her *Countess* quite unforgettable. Her voice, as her acting, is full of rich and individual character.

Jean Maubourg, a mezzo soprano, had a career of ten years at the Theatre de la Monnaie in Brussels before joining the Boston Company. Miss Maubourg also became a member of the Metropolitan Company.

Elvira Leveroni is a native of Boston, who studied singing with Miss Emma Howe, and went abroad with her in 1903. She studied for some months in Italy and made her début at one of the small theatres in "Mignon." She returned to her native land for a few months and then entered upon a further course of study in Italy under Sebastiani. She got an engagement at Naples, at the Mercadante Theatre, where she appeared in "Il Trovatore."

When the Boston Opera-House opened she was one of several young American singers who



were entrusted with small parts, and she has remained a member of the company.

Ella Kirmes, a native of Melrose, was also a pupil of Miss Howe, and went abroad with Miss Leveroni. She also was engaged for minor parts at the opening of the Boston Opera-House.

Viola Davenport, a singer of Medford, Mass., was a member of the company. She made her début as *Lakmé* on one of the debutante nights, and gave great promise of success. She showed much dramatic ability, and disclosed a voice of clear, unforced and bell-like quality, and individuality of timbre. She abandoned her operatic career at the end of the first season and became Mrs. Alva T. Fuller.

When the San Carlo Opera Company first visited Boston, in 1906, the leading soprano was Alice Neilson and the leading tenor Florencio Constantineau. There was, in fact, so much more of them than of any one else that people spoke less of hearing the San Carlo Company, than of hearing Neilson and Constantineau. It was largely due to the excellent work of these artists, supported by a good company, that the idea of permanent opera in Boston assumed definite shape, and when the project was formed



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FLORENCIO CONSTANTINEAU



the principals filled their time in other places and were ready as soon as the opera-house opened. Constantineau filled the intervening space as a member of the Manhattan Company. He remained three years with the Boston Company. The first year he bore the brunt of the work, and appeared many times. The second year he was also very conspicuous, but the third year he was kept more in the background, and at the end of the season of 1911-1912 he left the company and announced that he was to have an opera-house of his own in Bragado, which is not far from Buenos Ayres. He reached his height in Boito's "Mefistoféle" as *Faust*. He is not remarkable as an actor, but as a singer he constantly challenged comparison with Caruso. His voice was of a more lyric quality and his singing smooth and graceful.

Constantineau is a Spaniard, a native of Barcelona. He ran away from home to escape school, and it was not until he was twenty-five years of age that he realized the disadvantages of ignorance and began the serious study of letters and general musical subjects.

When he ran away Constantineau shipped on board of a steamer bound for Buenos Ayres, and worked as a machinist. On board the ship

he sang a good deal and so interested the passengers that he secured an introduction to the director of the opera-house at Montevideo, where he had a chance given him to study the tenor rôle in "Dolores." He also appeared in "Ernani," "La Favorita," "Rigoletto," "Faust," and other Italian operas which are very popular with South American audiences.

About this time Tetrizzini was singing for fifty dollars a night, and Caruso for a small sum. Constantineau considered himself well paid with a dollar and a half. He carefully husbanded his wealth and then returned to Italy.

While his South American experiences were valuable Constantineau considers that his success in opera dates from his appearance in "Manon" at Nice. He has a repertoire of more than forty operas, and he makes the proud boast that he has sung in every country in the world and in every city of prominence. In Naples he appeared, during his early days, with Caruso, and sang five times in three days, — at thirty-five francs a performance. In the course of time he was heard by Nickisch who was then director of the opera at St. Peters-



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burg, and who engaged him for that house. Here Constantineau first met and was associated with Tetrazzini. Later he went to Madrid and sang under the baton of Cleofonte Campanini. At the Royal Opera in Berlin he sang with Sembrich and Eames, and at Covent Garden he alternated with Caruso and sang with Melba. While singing at Nice he was heard by Henry Russell, who secured his services for the San Carlo Company, with which he made a tour through North America beginning at New Orleans and extending through Chicago to Montreal, Toronto, Boston, etc.

The story of Constantineau's engagement for the Manhattan Opera Company is worth telling, if only to show how much advantage the individual has over the corporation when a matter of quick decision comes to the front. It is related that Bonci, of the Metropolitan Opera-House, was taken ill, and, Constantineau having recently arrived in New York, the Metropolitan people sent and asked him if he would sing in Bonci's place for one night for \$1000. Constantineau replied that he would not sing for one night at that price, but he would accept an engagement for the season at \$1000 a night. After a conference they offered him four en-

gements, and later they offered six, to which he replied by stipulating for ten. While the management were discussing the problem a happy thought struck the singer. He jumped into a cab and drove to the Manhattan Opera-House where he found Hammerstein and asked if there was an engagement for him. After a short discussion Hammerstein made him a proposition for a five years' contract, which he accepted, and a couple of hours later the message came from the Metropolitan Opera-House agreeing to the ten performances, but it was too late.

On his resignation from the Boston Opera Company a dinner was given in his honor and much appreciation expressed regarding his artistic work.

An anecdote is told of Constantineau to the effect that one day in Bilbao, — his native city, — he was standing on the street watching the efforts of a shabby individual to squeeze out a few notes from a guitar so as to procure some money from the people, for dinner and lodging. The crowd was unsympathetic. Constantineau's sympathies being aroused he took the guitar, and stood by the man's side, singing. Then he passed round the hat and gathered up



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FLORENCIO CONSTANTINEAU AS CAVARADOSSI IN "TOSCA"



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a substantial sum, which he handed with the hat to the unfortunate musician.

A singer who made a genuine sensation during the first season of the Boston Opera was George Baklanoff, a Russian baritone, who while studying law at the University of St. Petersburg, had found that singing was his true vocation. Immediately after securing his degree at the university Baklanoff was offered an operatic engagement in one of the smaller Russian cities. A month later he was called to the Imperial Opera-House at Moscow, where he made his début in "The Demon" (Rubinstein's opera) in 1905, and since that time remained inseparable from the successful productions at Moscow.

In Boston Baklanoff made his début as *Barnaba* in "La Gioconda," and quickly became one of the chief attractions. He gave, alone, a scene from "The Miser Knight," a Russian opera, which enabled him to show his dramatic ability. Unfortunately Baklanoff gradually became obsessed with the idea that he was the opera, and committed a breach of discipline which led to a heavy fine and discharge from the company. After some discussion Mr. Baklanoff apologized for the breach of discipline



and remained until the end of the season. Public opinion sustained Mr. Russell.

An interesting story is told of Baklanoff to the effect that, during a revolutionary outbreak, his home in Russia was raided by a peasant mob. Several of them were captured and prosecuted, but Baklanoff not only refused to appear against them but took sides with them and appeared as their attorney, arguing that they had been led to believe that the millennium was at hand and they had a perfect right to anything upon which they could lay their hands.

Paul Bourrillon is a native of Bordeaux, France (1877), and began life as an amateur bicyclist, when he came in second in a race of a hundred miles. After this he went in for training and won championships and prizes innumerable, remaining unbeaten for two years and a half.

He was a friend of Renaud, and, while waiting for him one night at his rooms, sat down and sang the "Flower Song" from "Carmen." Renaud came in and heard him, and urged upon him a stage career. Without giving him time to decline Renaud pushed him into the hall, got a cab and took him to Vergnet, the

principal vocal teacher at the Conservatoire. After a year of study Bourrillon made his début in "Faust," in 1904, and after a tour of the provinces for a few months was engaged by Albert Carré for the Opéra Comique. He was still there when he was heard by Henry Russell who engaged him for the Boston Opera Company.

Rodolfo Fornari was born and educated in Italy, and made his début at the Del Verme Theatre in Milan. He was one of the earliest members of the Boston Opera Company, and has proved himself a valuable member, being always ready in an emergency, and an indefatigable worker. His best part is that of *Figaro* in "Il Barbiere."

Raymond Boulogne, who came to Boston in 1909, is a French singer with a large, strong, and a little rude and hard bass-baritone voice. A voice of resonant force and large effect rather than of finesse or elegance. Native vitality rather than polished style is conspicuous in it. He was sturdy and thickset, moves in a large operatic stride, makes large operatic gestures, knows and follows the big routine. Power forms and speeds his tones.

Giovanni Polese, who came to Boston at the

same time, has a virile voice and sings in a straightforward and manly fashion. Not a singer of nuances, but an honest baritone who rejoices in fulness of tone.

Carlo Cartica, who appeared in December, 1909, was a conventional lyric tenor, with an experience of many years in Italian opera-houses. He did not remain long in Boston.

Ramon Blanchart was one of the members of the San Carlo Company who joined the Boston Opera Company at the beginning. He is an excellent singer, and is remarkable in the fact that he was his own teacher.

Blanchart is a native of Barcelona and has had ten years' experience in the opera-houses of Spain and Portugal and Italy. He sang at La Scala and at the Imperial Opera-House in St. Petersburg. He has received many diplomas, titles and honors from various royalties.

Mr. Blanchart sings the baritone rôles in most of the standard operas, and is equally at home in French, Italian, Spanish and English.

Christian Hansen, a young Danish tenor, joined the Boston Company in 1909, but did not stay long. His career included engagements at Wiesbaden, Vienna, Dresden, and finally the

Royal Opera at Berlin. During his Berlin engagement he was induced to go to Italy for further study, and it was during this time that he came under the notice of Henry Russell and was secured for the Boston Company.

Giuseppe Gaudenzi, who appeared in the following season, is a native of Bologna, Italy, and a graduate of the law school of that city. His voice was so promising that he was advised to give up the profession of law and devote himself to grand opera. This advice he accepted, and during a career of four years previous to his Boston engagement, he had sung in Russia, South America, and Italy. Gaudenzi made his début in the rôle of *Mario Cavaradossi* in "Tosca."

M. Nivette was a leading bass of the Boston Opera Company in the season of 1909-1910. His voice was a deep, full, long-ranging bass. Its salient character was its smoothness and richness which at times recalled the like quality in the singing of Pol Plançon. There was no trace of the occasional roughness and harshness of the *basso profundo*, but rather the large, smooth, sonorous and pliant eloquence of the *basso-cantante*. He sang Mozart's music with the aptitude and practice in the art of song



that it requires, with the sure and polished style that it exacts, and the large freedom that accents the music and character, and with the discerning justice that is one of the traits of a highly trained and keenly intelligent French singer.

A review of the Boston Opera season, published in the *Boston Herald* of March 26, 1911 (the second season of the Boston Opera-House), shows that twenty-six operas were given and one scene from an opera, — (“Gerzige Ritter,” sung by Baklanoff), — with a total of one hundred and fourteen performances.

“Converse’s ‘Sacrifice’ had its first performance on any stage, ‘L’Enfant Prodigue’ and Laparra’s ‘Habanera’ had their initial performance in America on November 16, and December 14, 1910, respectively, and ‘La Fanciulla’ its first Boston presentation on January 17, 1911.

“Of the singers heard for the first time in Boston during the season Carmen Melis (who, however, had previously sung at a musicale) gave admirable impersonations of *Floria*, *Tosca*, and *Minnie* in ‘The Girl.’ Her brilliant beauty was especially displayed in ‘Mefistoféle.’ Her *Aida*, *Santuzza*, and *Manon* were



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conventional, her *Nedda* was unsatisfactory. She is much more effective in dramatic than in lyric parts.

“ Carolina White made a marked impression as a singer and actress in ‘ The Girl,’ and awakened a desire to hear her in other operas.

“ Korolowicz proved to be an interesting dramatic singer, and Rabinoff pleased by her youth, her graceful appearance, the quality of her voice, and even by her inexperience.

“ Madame Rappold and Madame Villani were comparatively ineffective, but Emmy Destinn’s wonderful art and voice and her intensity awakened the greatest admiration.

“ Ruby Savage gave distinction to minor parts by purity and brilliance of her voice and by her vocal skill, while Bernice Fisher was a charming *Micaela* in ‘ Carmen,’ and her *Magdalena* in ‘ The Sacrifice ’ was an agreeable feature of the production.

“ Of the contraltos, Celina Bonheur had a rich, full voice and sang with a certain style. She was heard in only one opera. Madame Czaploinska was an excellent *Lola*. She made her first appearance as *Amneris* in ‘ Aida ’ on November 19, 1911. Miss Roberts gave much promise, she was heard to best advantage as

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*Mellika*. Miss Leveroni was painstaking, and Miss Rogers useful in small parts.

“Jeska Swartz showed more than ordinary talent as a singer and actress. Her *Siebel* was attractive and her *Suzuki* one of the best we have seen and her singing and graceful appearance as the musician in ‘*Manon Lescaut*’ will be remembered.

“Madame Claessens is a singer of much experience, faithful in the discharge of her duties.

“Maria Gay was heard as *Carmen*, *Azucena*, *Amneris* and *Santuzza*. A woman of indisputable talent, richly endowed by nature. As *Amneris* she lacked stature and dignity. *Santuzza* is one of her best parts. Her performance of *Carmen*, striking and brilliant as it was at first, suffered little by little through extravagance in realistic effects.

“The tenors who were heard for the first time in Boston were Arenson, Bassi, Clement, Gaudenzi, Gerardi, Lasalle, Dalmores, Jadowker, McCormack, Riccardo Martin, and Zenatello.

“Arenson, as *Radames*, had a voice, but was not yet prepared for singing in public. Gaudenzi, Gerardi and Sciaretti passed as

tenors in the night and left only a vague remembrance.

“Bassi has a resonant metallic organ of liberal compass, but his singing was labored and unsympathetic, and his acting without charm.

“Clement was excellent. Lasalle, son of a famous baritone, turned out to be a tenor of little experience and little vocal art.

“Slezak has little personal magnetism, but his performance of *Otello* was impressive.

“Dalmores as *Faust* gave a performance of the very first rank. Jadlowker was effective except in ‘*La Traviata*.’ It was said of him that he was the first *Faust* in the memory of living children who could wear the doublet, hose and blond beard without appearing like a tailor’s dummy.

“Riccardo Martin was an excellent *Pinkerton* and a poor *Enzo*. Dinh Gilly gave distinction to the part of *Nick* in ‘*The Girl*.’

“Of the baritones Galeffi sang in Boston for the first time on November 16, 1910. At first his tremolo and his tendency to boisterousness made a bad impression, although the natural power and beauty of his voice was recognized. During the latter part of the season he sang

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with firmer control of his tone and finer musical taste.

“ Polese, formerly a member of the Manhattan Company, appeared in Boston first on January 2, 1911, as *Iago*. He took several parts during the season and in most of them was more than satisfactory. All in all he was a most useful member of the company.

“ Baklanoff elaborated parts in which he had already won a reputation. In spite of a breach of discipline he remained deservedly a great favorite.

“ Blanchart created the part of *Simeon* in ‘L’Enfant Prodigue.’ His enunciation of English and diction in Mr. Converse’s operas deserves high praise and was an object lesson to native singers. He is an operatic singer of dramatic intelligence.

“ Sibriakoff sang in ‘Mefistoféle’ (November 7), also *Mephistopheles* in Gounod’s ‘Faust’ and *Don Basilio*. His voice was sonorous but he knew little of the art of singing and as an actor was inefficient. Fornari was inadequate in any serious part.

“ Rothier of the Metropolitan was heard in Boston for the first time as *Escamillo*, *Mephistopheles* (Faust) and *Nikalantha*. His success

as a singer in 'Faust' was moderate, though he acted with considerable skill. In the other parts he made little impression.

"Mr. White made his first appearance as the *King* in 'Aida.' His voice is good and he ought to be used for more than minor parts.

"Mardones created, in the Boston Opera-House, the part of *Jack Wallace* in 'The Girl.' *Mephistofeles* (Boito) is his most important impersonation, though his performance of *Le Vieux* in 'La Habanera' had true distinction. Tavecchia showed individuality in small parts."

During the season of 1911-1912 many singers were heard in Boston for the first time, of these some were regular members of the Boston Company, some were exchange singers from the Metropolitan and the Chicago-Philadelphia Companies,—and the Montreal Company,—and some were special guests, for extra performances, not included in the regular season.

Of the new singers a French soprano, Zina Brozia, made her début on December 6 as *Thaïs*. She also appeared as *Marguerite* in "Faust," and as *Manon*, but did not long remain with the company.

Madame Brozia was born in Arles, in the south of France, and made her début in Brus-



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sels as *Marguerite*, after which she spent two years in filling engagements throughout Italy, France, Belgium and England. Henry Russell heard her at the Grand Opera in Paris and secured her for his company. She was not a success, though an attractive person with a pleasing voice.

Bernice Fisher is a native of Chicago. She was born in 1889 and after the usual grammar and high school education entered the Northwestern School of Music at Evanston, taking the full course in voice, piano and theoretical branches, and being graduated at the age of eighteen. The following two years were spent in Berlin where she studied with George Ferguson. She returned to Chicago in 1910 and shortly afterwards sang for Mr. Russell, during a visit of the Boston Company to Chicago. She was at once engaged as a member of the Boston Company, and has had more than ordinary success as *Micaela* in "Carmen," as *Grétel* in "Hänsel and Grétel," in "Lakmé," "Traviata," and the two new American operas, "The Sacrifice," and "The Pipe of Desire." She also received great praise for her impersonation of the boy *Yniold* in the Boston performances of "Pelléas et Mélisande," on which oc-



BERNICE FISHER



casion Philip Hale said of her: "Miss Fisher took a part that might easily be made boresome or ridiculous. She saved it and made it conspicuous," and H. T. Parker, of *The Transcript*, said: "There has been no such human *Yniold* on our stage."

Miss Fisher knew practically nothing of the stage when she became a member of the Boston Company, yet in her second season she had gained sufficient stage experience to take important rôles and elicit high praise from the dreaded fraternity of critics.

José Mardones is a native of Fonetcha, Province of Alba, in Spain. He began his vocal studies at the age of sixteen, with the organist of the Cathedral in Bribiesca, a neighboring town, and when nineteen was engaged as first bass of the Cathedral choir in Calancia. Four years later he went to Madrid and entered the Conservatory of Music. In two years he secured an engagement with a Spanish opera company and made a tour of South America, Spain and Portugal, returning to Madrid in 1907. Here he was invited, by the famous Vatican composer, Abbe Perosi, to take part in the performance of his new oratorio "Moses" at the Teatro Reale. He made another voyage to

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Buenos Ayres where he sang for a season, and on his return he sang at the San Carlo Theatre, Lisbon, the Reggio Theatre, Turin, and the Costanzi Theatre, Rome, after which he was invited to join the Boston Opera Company.

Mr. Mardones is an accomplished singer and has a large repertoire which he sings both in French and Italian. His chief success with the Boston Company has been in Boito's "Mefistoféle," in which he took the title rôle.

Sibiriakoff, a Russian, has impressive, but not ponderous or sluggish bulk, and orders his poses and movements skilfully. His voice is a rich, smooth, flexible bass, skilfully directed, capable of emotional and characterizing significance, and free from clouding infirmities and errors of what the singing teachers call "method." His tones give sensuous pleasure, he knows how to sing. As yet he has not much finesse, and he is no subtle penetrator of operatic character and operatic music.

Elizabeth Amsden is a native of East Boston, but during her school days her family moved to Providence, R. I., where she finished her education at the Elmhurst School in 1892. At this time her voice began to attract attention and she entered the International School for singers





Photograph by J. Williams, Boston

JOSÉ MARDONES AS *RAMFIS* IN "AIDA"



in Boston where she studied under William Whitney. She went to Paris where she remained for six years, and then appeared at Covent Garden in London under the management of Beecham, in 1910, after which she had engagements in Nice and Brussels. She became a member of the Boston Opera Company in 1911, and has proved herself a singer of more than ordinary ability. She is tall and slender, with a fine figure, has dramatic ability and magnetism, and is an unusually good linguist, speaking Italian, French and German, besides having a good knowledge of Russian.

Though she had been heard in one of the Sunday evening concerts, her operatic début in Boston was made on January 20, when she sang *Aida*, with Constantineau, Blanchart and Mar-dones, and on February 4 she sang *Minnie* in "The Girl," with Zenatello as *Johnson* and Polese as *Jack Rance*. In these two performances she was able to display an exceptionally fine voice, and promise of good things when her lack of experience is overcome.

Evelyn Scotney, also a new comer, has the distinction of being a protégé of Madame Melba. Miss Scotney is a native of Australia and was educated in the public schools of Melbourne.

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In due course she went to Paris where she became a pupil of Madame Marchesi, and made her début at Covent Garden in 1910, with such success that Mr. Russell sought her out for his company. Miss Scotney has a brilliant lyric soprano voice, and has succeeded well, for a young singer, in such rôles as *Gilda* in "Rigoletto," which suits so well the limpid quality and exceptional purity of her voice. She has also sung *Lucia* and "La Traviata." She was regarded as a singer of exceptional promise.

After the end of the season Miss Scotney's marriage was announced to Howard J. White, the son of a physician of Providence, R. I. Mr. White is a graduate of Brown University in Providence, R. I., who, after graduation took to music as a profession and became a member of the Boston Opera Company, in which he took minor parts in a very satisfactory manner. He has a good bass voice, and is also a good 'cello player.

Esther Ferrabini was a singer of much experience. A native of Italy, she has sung in almost every country in Europe and has had two seasons in South America. She was a member of the Montreal Opera Company before coming to Boston.



ELIZABETH AMSDEN





Yvonne de Treville, who came for a few performances in January, was, some ten years previous, a leading soprano with Henry M. Savage's American Opera Company. She was born in Galveston, Texas, her father being French and her mother American. In 1900, tired with too much singing she went to Italy for rest. The following year she decided to try her luck in Paris. After various changes of date, her début actually took place at the Opéra Comique on June 20, 1902, as *Lakmé*, and she received nine recalls. Since that time she has sung in many places. Her longest stop in any place was in Brussels where she remained three years at the Monnaie. Her appearance in Boston was on January 15, as *Gilda* in "Rigoletto," when she showed herself to be an interesting singer of the light, lyric order, with a voice of sweetness and flexibility.

Florence de Courcy, who became a member of the Boston Opera Company in 1911 to sing contralto rôles, is a native of New Orleans, but spent most of her life in France and regards Paris as her real home. She became a pupil of Jean de Reszké, and made her first appearance on the stage as a page in the memorable production of "Salome" in Paris, under the

personal direction of Strauss, at the Chatelet Theatre. De Reszké, however, insisted on her studying until she was fully trained for the stage, and she made her début in 1911 at Monte Carlo.

Edward Lankow is a native of Tarrytown, New York, and was born in 1883. He was the adopted son and pupil of Madame Anna Lankow, a noted singing teacher of New York, who died recently. It is related that when the young man was considered ready to enter upon a professional career, the question of a suitable name was discussed. Madame Lankow suggested several, but they did not seem to please her pupil, who finally suggested that he should use her name, as what he knew about singing was due to her. He accordingly started his professional career as Edward Lankow. He went abroad and spent one year in Dresden and two in Frankfort, and then went to Vienna expecting to sing merely as a guest. But he was engaged as first bass in the Imperial Opera-House, which was considered a remarkable post for so young a man whose operatic career had been so brief.

Mr. Lankow quickly made a most excellent impression on Boston audiences. In "Samson



EVELYN SCOTNEY





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et Dalila," in "Aida" as *Ramfis*, in "Pelléas" as *Arkel*, and as *King Mark* in "Tristan," Mr. Lankow showed a superb bass voice, and by his excellent diction gave charm to the most weary monologues of the old *King*. Mr. Lankow also enjoys the distinction of being a protégé of Felix Weingartner, and was one of the cast which gave the memorable performance of "Tristan" in February, 1912, with Madame Gadski, Madame Homer, Jacques Urlus, and Pasquale Amato. Lankow is a man of striking personality, being over six feet in height with muscular, well-knit figure.

Mr. Lankow sang *Arkel* in "Pelléas et Mélisande" at its first performance in Germany, when it was sung in German (and the illusion which characterizes the opera was lost), and he was sent for by Mr. Russell to go to Paris and sing for Mr. Debussy, who said, after hearing him: "It was for just such a voice as yours that I wrote the part."

Another basso, who joined the Boston Company in 1911, was Bernardo Olshansky. He is a Russian, who, driven by political persecution to seek the protection of America, arrived in New York about the year 1905, at the age of twenty. He worked hard at various trades, but

during all his struggles he kept before him his desire and determination to become a grand opera singer. A few months after landing in New York he began to take lessons with Giacomo Ginsburg, and worked with rare diligence. Three years later his teacher pronounced him equipped for opera and advised him to go to Italy for his début. Lacking worldly goods, and not familiar with other languages Olshansky nevertheless set out for Italy, and overcame all professional difficulties. He made his début in "Rigoletto" at Monza, and engagements from other towns were offered to him, but he decided to return to America and complete his studies.

Presently Mr. Olshansky was invited to sing at a musicale at the house of Mrs. B. Guinness, where his excellent diction, perfect phrasing, convincing rendition and his beautiful voice, deeply impressed the audience. Among them was Mr. R. L. Cottenet, a director of the Metropolitan Opera-House, who at once arranged for Olshansky to sing before Toscanini. Mrs. Guinness, however, engaged him for the following season and sent him to Paris to study French rôles under Andre Caplet, one of the conductors of the Boston Opera-House. Thus,



EDWARD LANKOW



after a romantic career, Olshansky is a member of an opera company.

Massimiliano Kaplick, a baritone, joined the opera company when only twenty-two years of age. He is a native of Berlin, son of a wealthy merchant, and at the age of nineteen became a pupil of the Berlin Royal Conservatory, from which he went to Italy. He made his début as *Valentine* in "Faust" at Porto Murisio in 1910, and sang afterwards in Italy and Germany.

On January 10, 1912, Vanni Marcoux, a French basso, made his American début as *Golaud* in "Pelléas et Mélisande," and created a favorable impression. M. Marcoux was born in Turin of French parents, and his father became a naturalized Italian citizen. Mr. Marcoux studied at first for the bar and passed the necessary examinations for admission. He had, however, received a very thorough musical training, studying the voice under Collino in Turin and Boyer in Paris, and he decided to turn to singing as a profession. Just as his father became a naturalized Italian, he himself became a naturalized Frenchman.

During his brief sojourn in Boston Mr. Mar-



coux presented new and remarkable interpretations of several operatic characters.

“ His impersonation of *Golaud*, ” said Philip Hale, in *The Boston Herald*, “ was most carefully composed. It was vitalized to an extraordinary degree. The character of the old husband . . . was little by little revealed until the very soul of the man was bared. Mr. Marcoux’s employment of his tones was as finely dramatic as his facial expression, the sobriety and seriousness of his gestures, the authoritative bearing, the dominating individuality. . . . All in all it was one of the most striking performances that I have seen on the operatic stage during the last thirty years.”

On January 26, Marcoux appeared as *Mephistopheles* in “ Faust ” and again surprised his audience by his unique and marvellous characterization. Again quoting the same critic: “ Mr. Marcoux gave a remarkable impersonation of *Mephistopheles* last night, probably the most subtly composed and adroitly acted since Jamet visited this city. Edouard de Reszké’s in comparison was commonplace, and while Plançon was indisputably superior to Mr. Marcoux as a singer, his dramatic conception was not so vivid, picturesque and varied. The



VANNI MARCOUX



*Mephistopheles* of Marcoux is at first friendly, companionable. He is evidently a man of the world, gay, witty, as full of devices as Casanova, only too conscious of the weakness of mortals. . . . In the garden scene his business, whether it were wholly original or derived in part from that of Faure, for years the great French *Mephistopheles*, was singularly effective. . . . His invocation was not roared, nor was he melodramatic in his handling of the hesitating *Faust*. . . . His finesse in vocal nuances was fully displayed in the serenade. . . . Mr. Marcoux's mockery was sinister, not boisterous. . . . The features indicated were only a few in a performance that should be carefully studied. Perhaps they were the most salient in an impersonation that was engrossing from beginning to end. Mr. Marcoux's voice is not robust; it is not sensuous; but it was used with rare skill for dramatic effect."

Mr. Marcoux appeared also in the performances of "Tosca," when Weingartner conducted, and Lucille Marcel took the title rôle. Zenatello sang *Mario*.

When "Pelléas et Mélisande" was produced in Boston in 1912, additional interest was given to the event by the importation of Ma-

dame Maeterlinck to interpret the part of *Mé-  
lisande*. Before her marriage Madame Maeter-  
linck was a well known actress, — Georgietta  
Leblanc, — and Maeterlinck is said to have  
sworn that only his wife could be the real *Mé-  
lisande*. This was said regarding the work as  
a play, for Debussy had not then written the  
opera, also Maeterlinck has no idea of music  
and is said to consider it useless noise. But  
Madame Maeterlinck had made some reputation  
by giving song recitals after a fashion of her  
own, in fact she had sung in opera and concert  
long before her marriage, and she was then con-  
spicuous by reason of an intensity that was fre-  
quently extravagant, and at times dangerously  
near absurdity. She used to give song recitals  
of an “intimate nature,” and would sing this  
song lying down, that one as she was lolling on  
a chair, and so on. She was described as a  
talented but not a restful person.

In 1892, when she was newly betrothed to  
Maurice Maeterlinck, an account of her was  
published in a musical journal now defunct:  
“Georgette Leblanc is a woman and singer of  
striking personality and pronounced individ-  
uality. The daughter of a ship-owner of Rouen,  
she is not the pupil of any music school. She



went to Paris to make her way and studied with Bax. Carvalho made her acquaintance and engaged her to create the part of *Françoise* in Bruneau's 'L'Attaque du Moulin' at the Opéra Comique (November 23, 1893). She then displayed an unregulated intensity that frightened the conservative manager, and the singer went to the Monnaie, Brussels, in 1895, where she made a sensation in 'La Navarraise,' 'Thaïs,' 'Carmen.' She afterwards sang at Bordeaux, Nice, and, in 1898, at Paris she gave song recitals of a singular nature, — '*audiences lyriques mimes.*' She was so astonishing in her methods that one of the critics warned young singers against imitation of her lest the result would be laughable disaster to the composer as well as the singer."

There was a lengthy review of her impersonation of *Carmen* from which we will quote as follows: "*Carmen* is, according to Miss Leblanc, a hybrid, monstrous creature. You look upon her with eager curiosity and with infinite sadness. . . . Miss Leblanc makes light of her voice. She maltreats it, triturates it, subjects it to inhuman inflections. . . . Her singing is not musical, her interpretation lacks the naïveté necessary to true dramatic power. Neverthe-

less she is one of the most emotional impersonators of our period. Her limited abilities, hidden by a thousand details in accentuation, remind one of the weak and ornate poetry of artistic degeneration. . . . Thanks to her, Antioch and Alexandra, adorable and corrupt cities, live again for an hour."

In singing the rôle of *Mélisande* in the opera Madame Maeterlinck became a rival of Mary Garden and of Maggie Teyte, two singers who had achieved reputation in the part. She depended upon her originality, and chanted, rather than sang the music.

Madame Maeterlinck is both French and Italian. Her father was an Italian and her mother a woman of an old family of Normandy. In an interview with a representative of *Musical America*, she expressed her views as to music as an accessory to the drama. "I prefer the play with the music of Faure to the opera of Debussy, as wonderful as that opera is, 'speciale, distingue,' a new thing in art. But the drama is truer if you ask me. I do not say that the music does not become at times a more poignant, emotional manner of expression than the spoken word. I think it often does. But the two arts are separate, and if they do

not harmonize perfectly in Debussy's setting of 'Pelléas,' where or when will they? Debussy's opera is a little paler, and it is a trifle more artificial, more 'arranged' than Maeterlinck's drama. Why should even such rare and harmonious music as this be asked to fill out the very pauses, the very silences that Maeterlinck loves so well, and that say so much more than either words or music. On the other hand, music here and there, when it is naturally suggested, when it comes itself, to heighten emotion or produce a keener impression of atmosphere — that is a good thing.

“ And yet the opera of Debussy is very wonderful. It is new, and in its way irreproachable art. Both Debussy and my husband are unique. They have influenced the young men in France. Founded a new school. The author and the musician are both too much in themselves, too rapt in the peculiar art which they have created to lay the foundation of what one would call a new school. Yet it is certain that Maeterlinck's influence on the younger generation of French dramatists has been great and lasting, and no one will say that Debussy has not his followers and imitators.

“ ‘ Of the men who have set your hus-

band's dramas to music whom do you prefer?'

"Oh! Debussy, of course. Fevrier? His music is very poor. It has no distinction, little originality, and little relation to the literary style of Maeterlinck, which is of the very first importance, one of Debussy's greatest claims to greatness in this opera. The only other man who has been pronouncedly successful so far is Dukas with his 'Ariane et Barbe-Bleue!' There is a great score. It is more Wagnerian than 'Pelléas.' It is more decorative, too. It has more line and substance than Debussy's music, and more brilliancy of coloring. He is a remarkable man, that Dukas."

Undoubtedly the most important event in the Boston season of 1911-1912 was the visit of Felix Weingartner, with his wife, Lucille Marcel. Under his direction were given three of the most noteworthy operatic performances ever given in the Boston Opera-House. The first "Tristan und Isolde," the second, "Tosca," and the third, "Aida." In "Tosca" Lucille Marcel sang the title rôle and Vanni Marcoux was *Scarpia*, and in "Aida" Miss Marcel also sang the title rôle.

It may not be amiss to give here a short



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biographical sketch of Felix Weingartner. The following is taken by permission from *Musical America*:

“ He was born June 2, 1863, at Zara, Dalmatia. He attended school at Graz, Styria, and began the study of music with W. A. Remy, whose real name was Mayer. In 1880 he published a piece for piano. He left college the following year and entered the Conservatory at Leipsic, where he was given a scholarship by the Austrian government and where he won the Mozart prize. He joined the circle of Liszt at Weimar, where his opera, ‘Sakuntala,’ was given March 23, 1884. Weingartner was then a brilliant pianist, and more occupied with the affairs of a virtuoso than with the science of conducting. Later he conducted at Königsberg, Dantzic and Hamburg, and then at Frankfort, where he directed performances of the ‘Ring.’ In 1891 he became conductor at the Royal Opera at Berlin and of the Royal Symphony concerts. In 1898 he withdrew from the Opera-House and made Munich his home. He first visited America in 1904, when he conducted two concerts of the New York Philharmonic Society. In the following year he conducted four more concerts by that organization and appeared in Boston as a



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pianist, playing the piano part of his sextet at a Kneisel concert. He appeared in Boston in Symphony Hall, January 17, 1906, leading the New York Philharmonic — a memorable occasion, when a Boston audience rose to its feet and shouted after a performance of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*, which was simply a revelation. In 1908 Mr. Weingartner succeeded Gustav Mahler at the Vienna Opera and as conductor of the concerts of the Vienna Philharmonic. Last year Mr. Weingartner resigned the directorship of the Vienna Opera, and a partial reason for this step was the charges of favoritism that were brought against him on account of extended concert tours in which he conducted and played the accompaniments of Miss Marcel."

Lucille Marcel is an American from New York, whose family name is Wasself. She studied piano with Alexander Lambert and singing with Madame Serrano in her native city for four years when a young girl.

Early in her 'teens she went to Berlin to study music and thence, in 1904, to Paris, where she was engaged by Carré, director of the *Opéra Comique*. Jean de Reszké, hearing her sing before the date set for her *début*, influenced her



LUCILLE MARCEL



to postpone her appearance and study under him, which she did. He thought so much of her voice and promise that he gave much time and care to her training.

On March 24, 1908, Miss Marcel made her first operatic appearance as *Elektra*, in the opera of that name by Richard Strauss, and she thus achieved great distinction. It is related that Madame von Mildenburg, the dramatic soprano of the Imperial Opera Company at Vienna, did not feel equal to so trying a part, and declined to sing it. Likewise also the second dramatic soprano of the company. Some time before Jean de Reszké had recommended Miss Marcel to Felix Weingartner, who now thought of her and offered her the part. She accepted, and at the performance made a profound impression. It is said also that Richard Strauss asked her to learn the part of *Salome*.

Miss Marcel afterwards sang *Eva* in the "Meistersingers," *Marguerite* in "Faust," *Tosca* and *Aida*.

In April, 1910, Miss Marcel resigned her position at the Vienna Imperial Opera-House, and in the following year she became Mrs. Felix Weingartner.

When she appeared in Boston in February,

1912, she made a deep impression, but apparently pleased more as *Marguerite* than as *Tosca* or *Aida*. Her voice is of a beautiful velvety quality, and her dramatic ability of a very high order. An excellent review of her performances in Boston was given in *The Herald*, by Philip Hale, and are as follows:

As *Tosca*: "Madame Marcel, who first won an European reputation by her impersonation of *Elektra* at the Court Opera-House in Vienna, has a voice of beautiful quality and its strength is sufficient for all legitimate dramatic purposes. Her tones are full, rich, and even. She has been well taught, and her own musical intelligence was evident in all that she did, whether it were in the lighter moments of the first act, or in the melodramatic scene with *Scarpia*. She did not sacrifice the melodic line or ignore the essential principles of song for the sake of dramatic emphasis. On the other hand, she was constantly expressive in song.

"While she is not an actress of an intensely passionate nature, while she did not last night rise to any tragic height, she had a definite idea as to the character of *Tosca*, and presented it unmistakably. . . . Madame Marcel at once struck the note of deep love for the painter.



She was wounded to the quick when she thought him unfaithful; but she did not rant nor did she behave like a spoiled child. Her *Floria* was a woman of the higher sort, not merely an applauded singer who fancied *Cavaradossi*. She was affectionate, demonstrative in her affection. Nor when *Scarpia* aroused her jealousy did she show herself a virago."

As *Marguerite*: "Madame Marcel took the part of *Marguerite* for the first time in this country. Her performance was distinguished by the beauty of her singing and adherence to the old traditions concerning the composition of the part rather than by any marked dramatic intensity or originality in conception. It was a pleasure to see again a *Marguerite* costumed as a German and not as a Dutch or a French maiden. It was also a pleasure to see a *Marguerite* who played the part simply, and without an attempt at new stage effects that might startle and arouse discussion. Her first meeting with *Faust* was natural, free from incongruous coquetry, and also free from sentimentalism. . . . In the garden scene she was a sympathetic figure by reason of the beauty of her tones, her vocal skill, and the unaffectedness of her acting. . . . Her action in the love scene

was quietly emotional, not passionate, and in the outburst to the stars there might well have been a more passionate confession. . . . In the scenes that followed she preserved the sobriety of her conception of the character."

As *Aida*: "She sang the music admirably, and it is suited to her voice, for if the part of *Aida* is ranked, and justly, among those for a dramatic soprano, the music is for the most part lyrical, and lyrical in the grand style. . . . Madame Marcel's voice was powerful enough to make an effect in the great ensemble of the second act, although in this one instance a voice of more metallic brilliancy is perhaps to be desired. . . . Madame Marcel has the voice and the pure vocal art to give character to the part by song alone.

"Her impersonation was simple, and as a dramatic performance, distinguished by what she fortunately did not do rather than by what she did. . . . Her impersonation was free from mannerisms, free from extravagancies committed by singers, who, feeling the necessity of acting, are merely violent in their attempt to convince the audience that they are acting. . . . She was emotional in her singing; she gave character to *Aida* through the music."

There is no doubt that Madame Marcel possesses a wonderfully beautiful voice, and that it may be difficult to describe it adequately, but one critic after hearing her as *Tosca* unburdened his soul in the following words: "It is given to few sopranos to have a tone of such breadth and depth, velvety and edgeless, that makes one think of treading on the softest and thickest of Oriental carpets."

With Mr. Weingartner and his wife came Jacques Urlus, a tenor from the opera-house at Leipzig, to take the part of *Tristan*. Mr. Urlus ranks high in the younger generation of tenors in Germany. The impression made in this performance was excellent, and Mr. Urlus was engaged for the Metropolitan Opera-House and for the Boston Opera-House for the next season.

The most concise criticism of that presentation of *Tristan* was written by Philip Hale, in *The Herald*:

"Mr. Urlus in the first act was not at first sight a strikingly romantic figure, but he soon made a deep impression by the fine quality of his voice; by the skill with which he used it, by his simple and yet imposing bearing, and above all by the absence of vocal tricks, mannerisms,

and faults which we have for many years been obliged to associate with German tenors in Wagner's music dramas.

“ His declamation always had force and meaning, and he did not shout or bawl; nor did he mistake palsy for passion. In cantabile passages, voice, vocal skill and emotional expression gave an additional glory to music that in itself is wondrously beautiful — as in the long duet with *Isolde* in the second act. Thrice admirable was his farewell to *Isolde* before he met *Melot* in the one-sided duel. And in the last act he was impressively dramatic without extravagance.

“ All in all, no German tenor who has taken the part of *Tristan* in this city has equalled him.”

During the third season of the Boston Opera Company, fourteen Italian operas were performed, nine French, two German and one in English, — “ The Sacrifice,” by Converse.

The season opened with the production, for the first time in Boston, of “ Samson et Dalila.” “ Werther ” was also produced for the first time in Boston, and “ Pelléas et Mélisande ” and “ Thaïs ” were new to the Boston Opera-



House, as were also "Mignon," "Hansel und Gretel," and "Tristan und Isolde."

The productions of "Samson et Dalila," "Germania," "Werther," and "La Habanera" excited especial admiration.

It is not necessary to speak of the visiting artists, as they are fully dealt with elsewhere, but for a brief review of the members of the company the summary published in *The Boston Herald*, from the pen of Mr. Philip Hale, will be found concise and to the point:—

"Let us consider for a moment the quality of the singers heard here this season for the first time at the opera-house.

"Miss Amsden, born in or near Boston, has a voice of unquestionable beauty, a voice powerful enough for dramatic parts. As a rule she sang with much intelligence. Mme. Brozia was unfortunate in her debut as *Thais*. Although she has a pretty face, she is not finely formed nor does she carry herself well. We all expect a revelation of beauty and grace when *Thais* comes upon the stage. She was more fortunate in her sympathetic impersonations of *Mimi* and *Manon*, nor was her *Marguerite* so ineffective as some have said. Her voice was light and agreeable when it was not forced. As *Mimi* she acted



with taste and intelligence, and her *Manon* was charming and in the St. Sulpice scene it was passionate.

“ Mr. Barreau took minor parts as a rule, but he is a valuable member of the company. His voice is agreeable and well trained.

“ Mme. De Courcy did well what she was called to do.

“ Mr. Lankow, though the part was a small one on the opening night, at once made a most favorable impression. There are few voices like his; I know of no bass to be compared with him in this country; for the voice is a true bass of liberal compass, rich, expressive, sonorous. Here is a real bass, not a bass of baritone quality.

“ Mr. de Potter is not yet ripe vocally for the stage. The organ is no doubt naturally a good one, but the singer has not yet learned to use it properly or effectively. As an actor he is inexperienced.

“ The case of Mr. Riddez is an unfortunate one. He has had experience and is dramatically intelligent. The composition of his parts commands respect.

“ Mr. Silli is evidently a man of large routine experience, a useful member. His *Ange-*

*lotti* is well conceived. In other parts he was the respectable bass who has faced many audiences.

“ Miss Scotney has a true coloratura voice, with high notes which she takes without effort and a middle register that at present is pale and in need of fattening. She is not yet ready to take such parts as *Lucia*, *Gilda*, *Violetta*, on subscription nights, but she promises much.

“ Mr. Clement may justly be ranked as a member of the local company and he and Messrs. Constantino and Zenatello were, then, the leading tenors. Mr. Zenatello developed greatly in the course of the season and shone in lyric and also heroic parts. He stands now in the very first rank as a dramatic singer. Mr. Clement's voice was not always in good condition; it sometimes sounded tired and it was not always under control, but the singer even then was interesting by reason of the polish of his diction and the finesse of his histrionic art. His *Werther* was one of the features of the season. Mr. Constantino is still a tenor of the old school. When he is in good humor, his voice and method give much pleasure, but he is restrained in action or in his eagerness to show the audience that he can act, his sweep-

ing and perfunctory gestures are almost grotesque.

“ Mr. Polese was often heard and he contributed largely to the success of the season. He added rôles to his repertoire and thereby won distinction. Mr. Blanchart had occasion to show the authority that comes from native stage instinct and long experience in leading opera-houses.

“ Mme. Melis is an excellent *Minnie*. Miss Fisher has gained steadily. She and Miss Swartz are among the most valuable members of the company, for what they do is done well. The two were seen in parts new to them, to their advantage and to the joy of the public. Miss Leveroni has gained in ease and the ability to express a sentiment or give a clue to a character.

“ Mme. Gay has been indefatigable as a leading member of the company. Her *Pilar* gave fresh interest to Laparra's melodrama.

“ The season on the whole has been a brilliant one. The coming of Mme. Leblanc-Maeterlinck, Mme. Marcel, Messrs. Marcoux, Urlus and Weingartner with the production of ‘ *Pelléas et Mélisande* ’ and ‘ *Tristan und Isolde* ’ would alone give it distinction; but there have been

noteworthy performances, and the standard has been higher than that of last season. There has been marked progress in the ballet; the orchestra is better balanced and more plastic; the chorus is well trained."

So much for the operas and the singers. The effect of the opera upon the community is expressed in a most amusing manner by a writer in *The Transcript* whose dissertation should be perpetuated:

"The grand opera season in Boston is over; and it passes with a revived and intensified interest, and an assurance of increased patronage and a more permanent community support in the coming seasons. Whenever any interest captures the heart and mind of Boston it becomes an institution, and, as such, a thing for Bostonians to praise and prize; and grand opera has about reached that stage of growth in Boston. New York has its grand opera; there it is a fad and a fashion; not to be a patron of the opera is to be a negligible quantity; it is just now the passion of the rich, the near rich and the little brothers of the rich. It does for the owners of jewels and clothes the same office that Madison Square Garden does for horses, automobiles and circuses; it is the show place of



the spenders, the semi-nude and the chatterers; but by and by when some other expensive method of exhibiting raw wealth and half-naked women is discovered New York will flout opera, and only the galleries which love music for music's sake will patronize it.

“ In Boston grand opera is now indorsed by all the churches and churchmen, and attendance at the opera places no one's morals under suspicion. Boston has adopted the opera and taken it to its heart and its moral and social standing is unquestioned. There is a close analogy between the Boston Opera-House and the kingdom of heaven; it has its angels; the saints sustain it; the Jordan refreshes and fertilizes it; the Society of St. Cecilia chants its praises; it is open to rich and poor; and the poorer you are when you stand outside its portals the higher you go after you enter in. The opera-house repeats the Story of Dives and Lazarus. When last heard from Lazarus was resting on Abraham's bosom while the malefactor was broiling in the nether places; the exact location of the patriarchal bosom is not indicated, but as Lazarus was in a position to peek over and enjoy the rapturous vision of Dives grilling and squirming, the presumption is that



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the patriarch and pauper were occupying a front seat in the gallery while Dives was in the pit, or, as we term it, the orchestra chairs."

Whether Boston is as different from New York as the above article indicates is open to question. Opera as a social function, with all the display which this term implies, is conspicuous in Boston. The writer in *The Transcript* reminds the present scribe of Lord Nelson, who, not wishing to see certain signals, applied the telescope to his blind eye.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE CHICAGO - PHILADELPHIA COMPANY UNDER ANDREAS DIPPEL

WHEN Oscar Hammerstein withdrew from the operatic field in 1910 his interests were disposed of partly to the Metropolitan Opera Company, and partly to a company formed by capitalists of Chicago and Philadelphia. In Chicago the Auditorium was remodelled and turned into an opera-house, Andreas Dippel was appointed director, and Bernard Ulrich business manager. Many of the singers of the Manhattan Opera-House were engaged by Dippel, who also secured others, and got together a very good company. The plan was to give a season of ten weeks in Chicago, and then to give a similar season in Philadelphia.

For many years Chicago had been obliged to take what it could get in the way of opera. Sometimes one week, sometimes two weeks, and there were several years when Chicago had to get along without opera altogether. In short,

Chicago was practically in the same condition as all the other of the most favored cities outside of New York,—and perhaps New Orleans, which has always had a separate operative existence of its own, of which little is heard or known in the North.

In the season of 1909-1910 Chicago was favored with a whole month of opera. Then the Hammerstein collapse occurred, and the determination arose amongst the solid men of Chicago, to supply the long felt want of a permanent organization. A capital of \$500,000 was soon subscribed. For the impression which that season left upon the public it will be well to quote from an article published in the *Dial* at the end of the season, in January, 1911:

“ Among the elements which have contributed to the success of a venture which caused many wise heads to wag doubtfully a few months ago we may mention those of major importance. The enterprise was set in motion by the right kind of driving force, the quality of energy which is put into their work by men of practical affairs. These men are not accustomed to failure, and they have now shown that in the untried field of artistic endeavor the far-sighted and sagacious methods which

bring business success are applicable to other than strictly business interests. . . . Finally the artistic forces assembled were such as to win confidence from the start, a confidence which we need hardly say has been more than justified by the ten weeks of actual performance. Not only were we provided with an array of soloists capable of meeting an exacting demand and of adapting themselves to a great variety of parts, but also with a completely adequate chorus and orchestra, and with stage settings that might fairly be described as sumptuous. We have only to add that as director general or field-marshal of all these forces and material adjuncts we were given the services of Signor Cleofonte Campanini, a great leader.

“ This much may be fairly said in the way of whole hearted praise. There remains the task of indicating, less for reproof than in the hope of future correction, what seem to us to have been instances of mistaken judgment in the planning of the work and its business management. It has been frankly an opera season upon a French-Italian basis, with Verdi, Puccini, Massenet, Charpentier, and Debussy for its supporting pillars. This has meant the production of several works hitherto unknown

to our public—‘*La Fanciulla del West*,’ ‘*Thais*,’ ‘*Louise*,’ and ‘*Pelléas et Mélisande*,’—for which we are extremely grateful. They are not great works but they are interesting ones, and it is well that they should have been performed—ideally, because it is only by test of performance that new works may be appraised; practically, because the appeal of novelty is one that the box office may not ignore. With these works we must also mention the over-discussed ‘*Salome*.’ This opera was announced long in advance, was given two performances, and was then withdrawn in deference to a storm of protest. . . . With the exception of ‘*Salome*’ and possibly ‘*Les Huguenots*,’ no work by a German was given during the entire season. This exclusion was deliberate, and did not result from a lack of the requisite forces; it had only the effect of alienating a large portion of the opera-going public, the section whose tastes are the most deserving of consideration. . . . We believe that the management will not again make the mistake of ignoring German opera in the interest of the inferior French and Italian forms. And we urge upon them with all the emphasis at our command not to give heed to the ill-advised plea for opera



in the English language, if that is to mean the wrenching of the score from the forms of foreign speech with which it is perforce most vitally linked. To deal in this brutal fashion with such a work as 'Tristan,' or 'Aida,' or 'Pelléas' would be an artistic indignity of which we do not like to think any true musician capable. Those who have asked for it have only the shallowest of arguments to advance in its favor, and they ignore the most fundamental aesthetic considerations. The only opera that has a right to be sung in English is opera which English composers have fitted to English words. When such works are given to the world we shall be among the foremost to welcome their appearance. But to anyone for whom an opera is a work of art, an attempt to sing it with translated words is simply unthinkable."

This article has been quoted at length because, in addition to the account of the establishment of permanent opera in Chicago, it deals with several questions of much importance. On some of the artistic points many people will differ from the writer in the *Dial*. As to whether the French and Italian forms of opera are inferior to the German, for instance. The complaint about German opera was answered

to a reasonable extent in the following season, and Chicago got more novelties than any other city. In regard to the translation of operas into English most people will agree with the writer in the *Dial*.

For the first season the leading singers were Mary Garden (who drew an \$11,000 house during the first week), Carolina White, Lillian Grenville, Mabel Riegelmann (a Chicago singer), Jeanne Korolowicz, Alice Zepilli, Madame Bressler-Gianoli, and Eleanora de Cisneros, while among the men were Nicolo Zerola, John McCormack, Bassi, Sammarco, Daddi, Dalmores, and Dufranne, most of whom have been referred to in the preceding pages.

In addition, there were several younger singers, and singers engaged during the season of 1910 and the following one, whose names were not prominent at the outset.

Among the new and younger artists perhaps the most noteworthy is Carolina White, who made a brilliant success in the Chicago-Philadelphia Opera Company. She was born at Dorchester, Mass., in 1885. She attended the public schools and was graduated from the Brighton high school at the age of seventeen. She then studied singing with Weldon Hunt, a

Boston teacher, for five years, at the end of which time she went abroad with her teacher and his wife to coach for opera at Naples under Frederick Roberti, and Carlo Sebastiani. She made her début at Naples in the San Carlo Opera-House in Wagner's "Dusk of the Gods," and afterwards appeared as *Aida*, *Santuzza*, and in "Mefistoféle." In the winter of 1909-1910 she was engaged by Ricordi and sang leading rôles in "La Wally," "Manon," "Aida," "Iris," "Tosca," "Madame Butterfly," "Hérodiade" and other operas, in the chief opera-houses of Italy.

In the fall of 1910 she joined the Chicago Opera Company and was the first in that city to take the part of *Minnie* in Puccini's "Girl of the Golden West." Her first appearance in Boston was in the same rôle on February 24, 1911. She also created the part of *Susanne* in Wolf-Ferrari's "Secret of Susanne" at the Metropolitan Opera-House in New York the same season, and during 1911-1912 she created the part of *Maliella* in "The Jewels of the Madonna," singing it with equal success in New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia.

Miss White's voice is a soprano of beautiful quality, she has a wonderfully quick intelli-



Photograph by — MATZENE — Chicago

CAROLINA WHITE AND SAMMARCO IN "SECRET OF SUZANNE"





gence, and has a repertoire of forty-five operas that she can sing in French, Italian, German and English. In 1910 she married Paul Longone, an orchestral conductor whom she met in Naples.

Jeanne Korolowicz, the Polish dramatic soprano of the Chicago-Philadelphia Company, was born in Warsaw. She received her musical education at the conservatory in Lemberg, from which she was graduated at the age of seventeen. During her student days she profited greatly by a scholarship which was established by Marcella Sembrich, and in later years when she was prospering she herself established two scholarships in the same conservatory, to help needy students. At her graduation she received a gold medal. She made her début at the Lemberg opera and was soon after called to Warsaw where she remained for over five years. She created the leading soprano rôle in Paderewski's opera "Manru."

At the end of her five years in Warsaw Miss Korolowicz made a tour of Europe, visiting the principal cities from Moscow to London. She was engaged for Chicago in 1910.

Jane Osborn-Hannah, is a native of Chicago and wife of Frank Hannah, American consul at

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Magdeburg, Ger. As a girl she studied singing under her mother, who was a teacher in Cincinnati. In 1903, after meeting with much success on the concert stage, Madame Osborn-Hannah was advised to go abroad and take up the study of opera. She went to Berlin and placed herself under the care of Rose Sucher, with whom she prepared all the Wagner soprano rôles with the exception of the two *Brünnhildes* and *Isolde*, though later she did prepare the "Siegfried" *Brünnhilde* for a special performance. After a year of hard work she was introduced to Arthur Nickisch, then director of the Leipzig opera, and he invited her to make an appearance as a guest. She sang *Elizabeth*, and did so well that she was engaged for three years, during which she mastered some twenty operatic rôles. Her greatest success has been in "Madame Butterfly," but she is known generally as a Wagnerian soprano.

In 1909 Andreas Dippel heard Madame Osborn-Hannah sing and engaged her for the Metropolitan Opera Company, of which he was then administrative director, and when he became director of the Philadelphia-Chicago Company he took her with him.

Alice Zepilli, who is one of the foremost

members of the Chicago-Philadelphia Company, came first to this country as a member of the Manhattan Company. Miss Zepilli is a native of Monte Carlo, a city which, although it is small has a wide reputation, and is an important musical centre. Miss Zepilli's father was musical director in this city, and he took a deep interest in the musical education of his daughter, so that in her early years she was thoroughly trained in music, and when it was found that she had a fine, sweet soprano voice, worth cultivating, it was decided to train her for the operatic stage. At first she studied some operas by herself, but presently she left home to continue her studies in Milan, where she made good progress for a time and then went on to Paris. There she became a pupil of Rose Caron.

Her début as a public singer was made in Venice, after which she returned to Monte Carlo to sing in opera, and she appeared at different times with many of the stars of the operatic world, among them being Caruso. Offers from other places now began to come, and she accepted an engagement at Buenos Ayres. On her return from that, she went to Cairo, Egypt. As before said, her New York début was made

at the Manhattan Opera-House, where her sweet voice and winsome personality fitted her for dainty and pathetic rôles. She made a hit as the *Doll* in "Tales of Hoffmann," — a memorable impersonation of a quaint and fantastic part. Between her American seasons Miss Zepilli has sung at the Opéra Comique in Paris, "Manon," "La Bohême," "La Traviata," "Lakmé," and "Madame Butterfly," in which latter opera she achieved particular distinction. When Mr. Dippel visited Europe to engage singers for Chicago, Alice Zepilli was one of the first to sign for the season of 1910-1911.

Madame Saltzman-Stevens, who became a member of the Chicago Company, is a native of Bloomington, Ill. Her father was a Frenchman naturalized in this country, and her mother a German. She was the youngest of a family of five, and her father dying when she was a child she had practically no musical advantages in early life. She was fond of music and sang as contralto in church, but her opportunity for musical study came after she married Mr. Stevens, a pharmacist of Bloomington, who wished to do all in his power to gratify her ambitions. Accordingly, she went abroad to study with König in Paris, previous to which time she had



been to the opera only thrice in her life, during a visit to Chicago. On one of these occasions she heard Nordica in "Die Walküre."

On arriving in Paris she found that König was dead, but learned that Jean de Reszké was teaching. She accordingly sought him, and he told her that she was a dramatic soprano. This was in 1905. In due course Madame Stevens went to London and sang for Hans Richter, who engaged her for the following winter, when she appeared at Covent Garden in "The Ring." Up to this time she had never sung with an orchestra. Engagements followed at Lisbon and at Berlin, and a German critic wrote of her that she was the most ideal Brünnhilde that had ever appeared on the German stage. Her voice is a perfect organ without a register, for every tone is equally beautiful and strong. She is of medium height, not stout, and by no means the figure one would expect for a *Brünnhilde*.

During the season of 1911-1912 Madame Saltzman-Stevens became a member of the Philadelphia-Chicago Company, making her début in Chicago as *Brünnhilde* in "Die Walküre" on December 21, 1911, and in Philadelphia, a few weeks later, as *Isolde*. On both occasions she



was cordially received and was considered to have made an emphatic success.

Miss Maggie Teyte, who has been a member of the Chicago-Philadelphia Company during two seasons, is described as a somewhat unusual and distinctly charming little person. Miss Teyte, whose name was originally Tate, is of Scotch-Irish descent, and went to Paris to study singing under Jean de Reszké. It was in Paris that her name was changed, in order that the Parisians might give it the proper pronunciation. After five years' study with de Reszké Miss Teyte appeared in Paris as *Mélisande*. Comparisons between Miss Teyte and Miss Garden naturally followed. One account runs thus, — "Whereas Maggie Teyte seems a younger *Mélisande* because she is small and slight with a voice that is unquestionably more pleasing, being a dramatic soprano of surprising warmth and carrying power considering her physical limitation, Miss Garden's way of dressing is, to most people, more successful. Miss Teyte's interpretation is simpler, but because it is less dramatic has neither the grace nor mystic allure of Miss Garden's. In short, while Miss Teyte is an altogether lovely *Mélisande* with a really charming voice, she is not,



Photograph by — MATZENE — Chicago

MAGGIE TEYTE AS *CINDERELLA* IN "CENDRILLON"



and it is doubtful if she ever will become, the intelligent and convincing artist that Mary Garden is and has been from the beginning."

In America Miss Teyte did not appear as *Mélisande*, a part which Miss Garden has jealously guarded as her own, but she made a charming *Cinderella*, and has been pleasing in all her rôles. She is considered an excellent interpreter of Debussy and other modern French composers. She made her début at Monte Carlo in 1906, when seventeen years of age.

Lillian Grenville, who was one of the sopranos engaged by Dippel for the first season of the Chicago-Philadelphia Opera Company, was born in Canada, and received her early training in the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Montreal. Her voice being considered worth cultivating she went to New York and took lessons, at the same time holding a choir position. Then she went abroad to study, and made her début at Nice in February, 1906, as *Juliette*. She secured a contract for three years, during which she was selected by Puccini to create the title rôle in his "Manon Lescaut." On the completion of her engagement at Nice she appeared at La Monnaie in Brussels, the Lyric in Milan, the San Carlo at Naples, the Carlo Felici

at Genoa, and the San Carlo in Lisbon. Her favorite rôles are *Manon*, *Thaïs*, *Tosca*, and *Ophelia*. During her engagement at Nice she appeared in the original production of "Quo Vadis."

Jennie Dufau, a member of the Chicago Company, is a lyric soprano, with a voice not large but of pleasing quality, though her high tones are thin. She uses it with much technical skill and excels in such parts as *Lakmé*, for which also her physical daintiness qualifies her. She was considered the most brilliant coloratura singer of the company except Tetrazzini.

Georgia Cavan is one of the younger American singers of the company, who takes small parts. She has studied in Salzburg with Madame Ternina. Mabel Riegelmann also takes small parts, Marguerite Starrell and Minnie Egner are also mentioned as younger members of the company, who are making the most of their opportunities.

Louise Berat is also frequently mentioned in the accounts of Chicago operatic performances. She has a contralto voice of excellent quality.

When Mr. Dippel produced "Die Walküre" in Chicago in December, 1911, a portion of



one of the reviews read as follows, — “ Marta Wittkowska’s splendid sonorous tones as *Waltraute* echoed from the mountain heights soaring superior to the sea of sound in the orchestra.”

Marta Wittkowska, the possessor of this remarkably described voice, was born in Poland, and brought by her parents to America when she was a young child. The family settled in Syracuse, N. Y., and at the age of fourteen it was discovered that the young girl had a very promising voice. Her parents were poor and unable to give her a musical education, but a scholarship was awarded her by Syracuse University and she entered as a special student in the vocal department.

Miss Wittkowska remained at Syracuse University for two years, taking full advantage of her opportunities and then, Madame Schumann-Heink visiting Syracuse to sing at a concert, Marta Wittkowska called upon her and asked permission to sing for her. Madame Schumann-Heink declared that her voice was one of the most promising she had ever heard, and strongly urged her to go to Germany and take up the study of Wagnerian operas.

This course was not possible at that time but

Miss Wittkowska went to New York and studied under Miss Emma Thursby. After a year of study she was sent abroad by a lady who was interested in her, and she studied under the venerable Cotogni. At the end of six months she made her début at Perugia as the *Mother* in "La Gioconda." Other engagements followed, and she sang such rôles as *Azucena*, *Ameris*, *Dalila*, etc. She also went to Paris to study French rôles. While singing at Covent Garden Andreas Dippel heard her, and Miss Wittkowska was secured for the Chicago-Philadelphia Opera Company, of which she has been one of the most popular members.

George Hamlin, who already had an international reputation as a concert and oratorio singer, became a member of the Chicago-Philadelphia Company in the season of 1911-1912, having been asked by Mr. Dippel to sing the leading rôle in "Natoma," an American opera, on an American subject, to be sung by American singers.

Mr. Hamlin is a native of Chicago, and as a young man developed a good voice and attracted attention as an amateur. He was expecting a business career, but being invited to sing as soloist in a production of the "Hymn of Praise" at



Photograph by — MATZENE — Chicago

MARTA WITTKOWSKA AS AMNERIS IN "AIDA"



St. Louis, and making a distinct success, he decided upon music for his profession. He instituted Sunday afternoon concerts in Chicago, a plan which has become popular.

Mr. Hamlin has appeared repeatedly as a concert singer with nearly all the leading musical organizations in America, and has had many similar engagements in Germany, besides giving many song recitals.

Grand opera is an entirely different field, and leads to criticism from a different point of view, but Mr. Hamlin stood the ordeal. "Mr. Hamlin's voice," wrote a critic after the Philadelphia début, "has much to commend it in the way of smoothness and sympathy, and he sings with taste and skill, while he also carried himself well, put real feeling into his acting, and altogether made a highly favorable impression. His enunciation was noticeably clear and distinct."

Gustav Huberdeau, the French basso-cantante, joined the Manhattan forces in 1908, and was transferred to the Chicago-Philadelphia Company when Oscar Hammerstein went out of business. As a boy Huberdeau made a study of the violin and theory of music, and at the age of seventeen entered the Paris Conservatoire,



where he carried off the chief prizes. At the Conservatoire he studied singing and at the completion of his course was engaged by Carré for the Opéra Comique. Here he remained for ten years, from 1898 to 1908, creating the principal bass rôles in every new production. Huberdeau is an excellent singer and an intelligent actor, and has proved himself a valuable member of these opera companies.

Amadeo Bassi, the tenor, one of the most popular members of the Chicago-Philadelphia Company, has an enormous repertoire, and an impressive style of acting. He began his musical career early, for as a boy he had a remarkable voice, which as he matured developed into a lyric tenor. He was trained by the best teachers and made his début as the *Duke* in "Rigoletto" before he was twenty years of age, at the Arena Nazionale in Florence. He has sung in many opera-houses and was well known in Italy, Spain, Russia, on the Riviera and in South America before he came to the United States.

Edmund Warnery is a French tenor and a personal friend of M. Debussy, by whom he has been coached in most of his different rôles. He created the rôle of *Pelléas* at the production

in Covent Garden, London, of "Pelléas et Mélisande" and was the first to appear in that part in Chicago. Mr. Dippel engaged him while he was forming the Chicago-Philadelphia Company, and he has remained with the company through its two seasons.

In order to note the progress made by the Chicago-Philadelphia Company it will be well to quote from the review of the second season published in the *Dial* in February, 1912:

"The public spirited citizens whose faith and enterprise made possible the existence of the Chicago Grand Opera Company have excellent reasons for congratulating themselves and all others concerned in the undertaking. The second season of the organization ended on the first of this month, and the receipts for the ten weeks have come close to meeting expenses. Last year's balance sheet showed a deficit of approximately twenty per cent, which came out of the pockets of the guarantors; this year they have had to pay practically nothing for their disinterested endeavor to do the public an important artistic service.

"The reasons for this satisfactory measure of financial success in what seemed at the outset a precarious venture are numerous and

varied. The competent direction of Mr. Andreas Dippel accounts for much of it; much also must be credited to the artists whom he enlisted in the enterprise. The superb musicianship of Signor Cleofonte Campanini is responsible for a great deal, for in such matters as balance of tone and unity of effect the artistic results which he achieved were maintained at a high level of excellence, and, at their best, were almost beyond praise. A word should also be said for Mr. Alfred Szendrei, who conducted a few German works, and whose readings were of exceptional beauty. Among the principals Miss Mary Garden was the popular favorite. In the chorus we had a collection of fresh young voices of a quality to which our operatic stage has not been accustomed, admirably trained to sing in three languages which the standard repertory demands. . . . Mr. Dippel has been highly successful in guessing what the public wants. He has given us twenty-four works in seventy-eight performances, 'Carmen,' 'Cendrillon,' and 'I Gioielli della Madonna' heading the list with six performances each. Eight other works have been given four or five times each. Thirty-six of the performances have been in French, twenty in Italian, and the others in

German or English. . . . One novelty — the ‘Quo Vadis?’ of M. Nougues — produced at great cost, failed to attract audiences large enough to make it worth while, and was withdrawn after four attempts to make it go. Among the Italian productions, the most noteworthy were those that gave Chicago its first hearing of Signor Wolf-Ferrari’s ‘Il Segreto di Susanna’ and ‘I Gioielli della Madonna.’ The former, a delightful short work of almost Mozartian inspiration, won the hearts of all its hearers; the latter, which was given its first American production, was distinguished by the presence of the composer, who had come to America for the occasion of this *première* performance.

“The ill-judged propaganda which has been conducted of late by the zealous but mistaken persons who think that all opera should be sung in the English language for English-speaking audiences drove an entering wedge into the work of the Chicago season. Mr. Herbert’s ‘Natoma’ was, as of course it should be, sung in English, that being the language for which the music was written. But ‘Hänsel und Gretel’ is a different matter, and the best that can be said of the artistic perversion to which



it was subjected is that the audiences hardly realized that they were listening to English words, and could understand only a small fraction of them.

“ Last year not a single German work was given during the ten weeks; this year we have had eleven performances of ‘Lohengrin,’ ‘Die Walküre,’ and ‘Tristan und Isolde,’ five of ‘Hänsel und Gretel,’ and two of ‘Le Nozze di Figaro.’ This is something, but not nearly enough.”

It is not necessary to record the Philadelphia season, as it was given by the same company at the close of the Chicago season.

An interesting summary of the Chicago season, and a comparison with the doings of New York and Boston was made by the Chicago representative of *Musical America*, and is as follows:

“ A painstaking statistician, in view of the departure of the Chicago Grand Opera Company for other fields, presents a tabulation of facts, indicating the popular taste of to-day. In considering the répertoire of the three large opera companies, those of New York, Boston and Chicago, it is observed that German opera has been the most largely represented in New



York, while French opera has been the predominant school of Chicago. Chicago has produced four times as many new works as New York and five more than Boston. Forty different operas have been produced this season by the three companies named; seventeen were Italian; ten German; eleven French and two English. The local opera company during its stay was represented by seventeen different composers against twelve who contributed to the Metropolitan repertoire or eight heard in Boston."

Mr. Dippel's activities did not end with Chicago and Philadelphia, for his company gave performances in New York and Baltimore, and visited many of the cities between Chicago and the Pacific coast, the nearer cities during the season, and the distant ones during the early spring. There appears to be ample opportunity for the Chicago Opera Company.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

ONE of the most promising features of the past three years has been the tendency to bring forward young American singers, and give them an opportunity in their native land. With the growth of opera and the establishment of more opera-houses the opportunities will be greater. It is, and will be, still more impossible that all the singers employed shall be high priced "stars" with the, formerly considered indispensable, "foreign reputation." We have before us several noteworthy instances of singers who have "made good" in grand opera without any European training or experience, some of them now taking leading rôles. Marie Rappold, and Alma Gluck in New York, Bernice Fisher, and Jeska Swartz in Boston, and there are some in Chicago. Those who have had some experience abroad and have found places in America are very numerous, we can cite a few only, —

Carolina White, Marta Wittkowska, Jane Osborn-Hannah, etc., in Chicago; Edward Lankow, Putnam Griswold, Clarence Whitehill, Eleanora de Cisneros, Bernice de Pasquali and very many more, — the names are quoted from memory only.

We have, for many years, had American singers in our grand opera companies, but in the past few years they appear to be the rule rather than the exception, although they frequently appear under foreign names.

The way of the singer is not easy. European cities are swarmed with American operatic aspirants of whom comparatively few ever reach a hearing.

It is to be hoped that in America our singers may at least have as good opportunities for failure, as well as success, in their native land, and with less risk; that the public should more and more be willing to hear those who are judged to have good promise, even if they have not the "European reputation." In short, that the singers should be allowed to make their reputation, in their native land. This can be done if audiences are sufficiently cultured to judge singers by their merits.

It is to be regretted that in this book we

cannot give some account of the many American singers who are succeeding in Europe but have not, as yet, been engaged in the Grand Opera enterprises of the greater American cities. Gertrude Rennyson, for instance, a native of Morristown, Pa., has had an excellent operatic career in Europe and has had the honor of singing at Bayreuth. Marcella Craft, from Indianapolis, who was well known some years ago as a church singer in Boston, is enjoying a successful career in Europe. Alys Lorraine, after a successful career in Holland, has made her début in Paris. Vernon Stiles secured a five years' engagement at Vienna, and William Picaver, from Albany, N. Y., sang for five years at Prague and then went to the Royal Vienna Opera. . . . But an account of all these rising artists would increase the book indefinitely.

It has been the desire of the writer to show the development of Grand Opera in America during the past decade. Not only has New York been stirred up to its best efforts by the competition between the Metropolitan and the Manhattan Opera-Houses, but the excitement has spread to other cities, and opera on a more or less permanent basis is likely to be established in many centres during the next few years.



The artistic standard is not likely to lapse through lack of competition, because, in the first place, it has been pushed up to a certain point, and a retrograde movement would kill operatic enterprise in any city attempting it; also the competition between cities is sufficient to keep up the artistic standard.

The greater companies have carried grand opera to many of the large cities, and their work has been supplemented by smaller organizations which visit cities and towns not yet able to attract the great companies.

The Metropolitan Company has made trips as far south as Atlanta, after its own season. The Chicago Company has gone as far as the Pacific coast. Then, if we watch the musical journals, we find accounts of such companies as the Lombardi Company and the Le Brun Company, which have travelled much in the west and southwest. Then there are such companies as those of Henry M. Savage, giving opera in English. Mr. Savage's companies are generally devoted to a less ambitious class of opera, but some years ago he had an excellent company giving grand opera in English. He gave a capital production of "Parsifal," which has already been mentioned in these pages. In his



Grand Opera Company Mr. Savage employed many singers who have since become famous, and if his performances could not be classed with those of the Metropolitan, they did a great deal towards educating the public in Grand Opera. The writer quite agrees with those who consider that opera sung in any language than that for which it was written is an artistic abomination. But the main point is this,—there are many thousands of people who are repelled by the idea of listening to what they cannot understand. Give them opera in English and they will enjoy it. When they find that it is just as unintelligible in English as in any other language, they will learn to appreciate the more artistic presentation of opera in its own language. Opera in English appeals to a very large public of moderate means and education, and should be encouraged as a means to an end.

Since the days of Mapleson, Grau, etc., a marked change has come over the operatic chorus. The chorus singer is no longer an Italian brigand hibernating in America and returning in the spring to his regular business,—as he was described in Mapleson's time. The chorus of to-day consists of fresh young voices

of operatic aspirants trained in this country, though in most houses there is a background of European routine chorus singers.

The result is gratifying both as to the quality of tone produced and the personal attractiveness of the chorus. Hardly an account of the production of "Parsifal," for instance, failed to expatiate upon the beauty of the flower maidens, both vocal and physical.

In the orchestra a corresponding improvement has been accomplished. More first-rate musicians have been employed, and the size of the orchestra has been increased. But the most important innovation was the artist conductor. If we hark back to Maretscheck's account of the opera orchestra as he found it, when the conductor used to play first violin during the most strenuous moments, to the conductor of to-day, who is an artist in his line, the difference is astonishing. This change began definitely when Anton Seidl was brought over to conduct German opera, and it has continued ever since. To-day with Hertz, and Toscanini in New York, Cleofonte Campanini in Chicago, Caplet in Boston, we have a most efficient corps of conductors.

The "guest" conductor seems likely to flourish in the near future. The performances in

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Boston given under the baton of Felix Weingartner were of such excellence that others are sure to follow. But they will be impossible except with a thoroughly well-trained orchestra capable of receiving at once the artistic impressions of the visiting conductor, so that a triumph for a visiting conductor is really no less a triumph for the regular conductor who has trained the orchestra.

Another important step in advance has been the growing importance of the composer and the work. In former days the prima donna and the tenor were the "whole show." To-day the attention of the public is focussed more particularly upon the work and its composer, while the singer is regarded more as a medium through which the artistic impression is to be received. There is good reason for this. The opera of to-day is not a string of show pieces for the principals, with the chorus brought in occasionally without rhyme or reason. We have now the "music-drama," and the works of modern composers cannot be judged by the old standards. In many of them, especially those of Richard Strauss and Debussy, the brunt of the work falls upon the orchestra, and the voices are considered of small account,

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though the acting is immensely important. All this does not diminish the actual value of the prima donna, though it may have some effect upon her relative importance. But in order to succeed in the modern music drama she must have qualities not formerly necessary. The artistic value of the work as a whole far exceeds the importance of any one person taking part in it. Opera is becoming a psychological problem.

In concluding, let us quote from Shaler's "Individual": "Thirty centuries have given little or nothing of gain in the way of speech, written or spoken, for in such work no man has done better than he who wrote the story of Job. In gesture and the related sculpture we tell less than the masters of old; in painting hardly more. In music alone has the last thousand years helped men to express themselves. There indeed, is a most substantial gain, one in which the possibilities are as yet by no means exhausted. Something of further advance may be won in this endeavor to convey a knowledge of our feelings in the remoter experiences of the mind through the statement of scientific concepts."





**PART II**  
**GRAND OPERA SINGERS**  
**1912-1922**



## CHAPTER I

### THE METROPOLITAN OPERA COMPANY

1912-1922

DURING these ten years the only Opera Company, in the United States, which has gone on without interruption is the Metropolitan Company of New York. Even the great war did not materially affect it.

During the seasons of 1912-13, and 1913-14, the Boston Opera flourished and introduced some noteworthy singers to the American public, such as Louise Edvina, Muratore, and Ferrari-Fontana. But these joined other companies later, and are best recorded in their places with the Metropolitan or Chicago companies. The Boston company ceased to exist in 1914, and from that date Boston has been eliminated as an operatic centre.

In the short space allotted to these ten years it is impossible to deal at length with any but the most noted singers. There have been many American singers of ability who have come be-

fore the public with more or less success. In these latter days they have had opportunities which were, in former years, denied them. They have gained admission to the great companies, sometimes after having had experience in the minor companies, and have had to await their opportunity. Some have succeeded. Others have made only moderate success, and some have failed. Many of the imported singers also have failed. Of one tenor a critic writes, "he should be reserved for matinéés attended by inquisitive children." Of another we find,—"he led the hearer to wonder why the Metropolitan Company had engaged him." The singers who get the best start do not always make the best finish.

A tenor, in order to be a real success, must possess almost superhuman qualities, otherwise he is frequently an object of scorn.

The most noteworthy addition to the Metropolitan Opera Company in 1912 was Frieda Hempel, who had been for the preceding five years principal coloratura soprano at the Royal Opera in Berlin. Miss Hempel is a native of Leipzig, and took her first music lessons at the Conservatory in that city. From the age of ten to fifteen she studied the piano, which was to



FRIEDA HEMPEL





be her chosen life work. As she grew up her voice was discovered, and at the age of seventeen she entered the Stern Conservatory in Berlin under the instruction of Frau Niklass-Kemper. At the end of three years she was heard by Count Hülson, the intendant of the Royal Opera in Berlin, at a pupils' concert. He offered her an engagement on condition that she would acquire stage training at one of the lesser theatres. She signed a five years' contract with the Court Opera at Schwerin. Here she achieved success and essayed a wide variety of rôles. After eight months of experience she was invited by Frau Cosima Wagner to assist at Bayreuth, and later she sang a Mozart cycle at Munich with pronounced distinction.

In 1907 the Kaiser heard her in a court concert, and at his desire she was released from the Schwerin contract to join the Royal Opera in Berlin, where, on August 20 she made her début as the *Queen* in "Les Huguenots." Three days later she appeared as *Mrs. Page* in "The Merry Wives of Windsor."

During the eight years of her stage experience, previous to her arrival in America, Miss Hempel had acquired a repertoire of forty-five

rôles, comprising not only coloratura parts, but many others also. She had sung in Munich and the chief cities of Austria, Belgium, France and Hungary, besides Schwerin and Berlin.

Thus fortified she appeared before a great audience at the Metropolitan Opera House on December 27, 1912, as the *Queen* in "Les Huguenots." Having suffered from illness, which delayed her start from Germany, and then a rough voyage, it was to be assumed that she would not be at her best on that night, yet we are told that "before the second act was half over it was clear that Frieda Hempel was the object of interest. The whole house broke into a whirlwind of applause after she had sung the first florid phrases of *Marguerite de Valois's* initial air. She was recalled ten times, after the curtain fell, while the ushers unloaded basketfuls of flowers at her feet."

She had "made good" with the audience. Now as to the critics:

"Purity, freshness, flexibility, an extensive upward range and much brilliancy of coloratura execution were the features disclosed most prominently in her singing. Her voice is not large, but it is well produced, breath supply abundant, and her phrasing bespeaks unusual

taste. Her staccati were crisp and glittering, her trill remarkable for evenness. It is not a voice remarkable for warmth, nor for a wide variety of color. The upper tones are inclined to thinness, the medium tones have body and smoothness, but the lower register lacks both color and resonance. All things considered she is an artist with a pure style and without any apparent inclination to stoop to any of the meretricious devices to which coloratura singers are prone to resort. She has a graceful and pleasing stage presence."

At her Boston début, Jan. 20, 1913, we find:

"She appears to be an artist of a school now almost entirely disappeared, and her art holds a nearer relation to that of Sembrich than to any other singer known to the American public. She is mistress of the fine old manner."

The most grudging criticism admits that she is an admirable artist, though not superior to the world-famed coloratura singers who have preceded her at the Metropolitan.

Miss Hempel has remained before the public with undiminished popularity to the present day (1922). In 1918 she married William B. Kahn, of New York.

Lucrezia Bori, who made her début at the

Metropolitan Opera House on November 11, 1912, in "*Manon Lescaut*," is a native of Valencia, Spain, daughter of Colonel Borga of the Spanish army. Owing to social prejudices her parents did not wish her to study for the stage, but she succeeded in overcoming their objections and went to Milan where she studied under Melchior Vidal, a Spaniard, and soon after made her début at the Teatro Adriano in Rome as *Micaela* in "*Carmen*." Although only eighteen years of age her success was pronounced, and she got engagements in other Italian cities.

When the Metropolitan Company gave a season in Paris, in 1910, Mr. Gatti-Casazza chose Miss Bori to sing *Manon* with Caruso and Amato, and he engaged her for the New York season of 1912-13. Meanwhile she became a member of La Scala, at Milan, where she created the title rôle in Strauss's "*Rosenkavalier*" and the *Goose Girl* in "*Königskinder*." During the summer of 1912 she sang in Buenos Ayres.

When she appeared in New York the critics declared that "she is a notable artist now and will develop into a greater one. In face, histrionic skill, and vocal timbre she is strikingly



suggestive of Geraldine Farrar. Her voice is of lighter texture and more purely lyrical, but it has much the same capacity for taking on a wide variety of emotional color. It has a lovely appealing quality, if not of great body; fresh, flexible, exquisitely limpid and unforced in the upper register, and equalized throughout its compass. She has rare command of dynamic shading, her crescendo and diminuendo on single tones are exceptionally lovely. Her face is ever expressive."

Two or three years later she suffered a loss of voice, and returned to Europe, where she tried all kinds of doctors. Eventually she went to Milan and was operated on for a node on the vocal chord. After a period of complete rest her singing powers returned, and she resumed her career in 1919.

Among the singers new to the Metropolitan in this season was Lila Robeson, a native of Cleveland, O., who had gained some experience with the Aborn Opera company, after studying in Cleveland with Mrs. Seabury Ford, and in New York with Luckstone and Saenger. She had appeared in contralto parts such as *Amneris* in "Aida," *Azucena* in "Il Trovatore," and *Ortrud* in "Lohengrin," and her opportu-

nity at the Metropolitan came when, Matzenaur being indisposed, she was called upon to sing the part of *Fricka*, without rehearsal, with Fremstad, Gadske and Griswold.

Jacques Urlus, a Dutch tenor, made his début at the Metropolitan in February, 1913, an event which was sensational owing to his complete loss of voice during the performance. Later he appeared in the Nibelungen Cycle and amply made up for the earlier disappointment.

"He is the most valuable tenor acquisition," writes a critic, "that the Metropolitan has made in years, uniting superlative excellence of voice, musical understanding, etc. To the eye he is one of the most fascinating exponents of the fearless hero since Max Alvary. His portrayal of the character (*Siegfried*) is essentially poetic in conception."

Mr. Urlus was born in Amsterdam, educated at Utrecht and his native city, where he became tenor in the opera house and, after two years, took the leading parts. His first leading part was *Lohengrin*. He sang at Bayreuth for some years. He remained with the Metropolitan Company till 1917.

Paul Althouse, an American tenor, with no foreign training or experience, made his début

at the Metropolitan late in this season, in March, at the production of "Boris Godounov," in which opera he was cast as the *False Dimitri*.

"Not in years," writes a critic, "has a native tenor appeared offering such possibilities as were revealed in the equipment of Mr. Althouse. He has a voice of unusual beauty of quality and a style of vocalism that brings it forth to the greatest advantage."

Paul Althouse is a native of Reading, Pa. and was educated in his home city and at Bucknell University. He studied singing with Percy Rector Stephens and Oscar Saenger. In his boyhood he was a church soprano. His parents wished him to follow a commercial career and he had various experiences in business occupations; but kept in view his desire for a musical career. At the age of twenty he cut loose from business and went to New York, where he studied hard for two years and at last obtained a hearing at the Metropolitan, singing "Celeste Aida" in such a manner that even the accompanist lost his bored expression. A contract was made, and he gained stage experience by appearing in minor parts. Eventually his chance came in "Boris Godounov." He was said to have been the first American

tenor without European experience,—to sing leading rôles at the Metropolitan. He had a leading rôle in the production of “*Madeline*” and of “*Madame Sans-Gêne*” in 1916, and he created the part of *The Squire* in “*The Canterbury Pilgrims*” at its very first performance, also the principal tenor rôle in “*Shanewis*.” Since his début at the Metropolitan, Mr. Alt-house has sung with practically all the leading organizations throughout the United States. In 1914 he married Elizabeth Breen of St. Paul, Minn.

Another American singer who made her début in “*Boris Godounov*” was Sophie Braslau, contralto, who took the part of *Theodora*,—“a charming and vocally eloquent *Theodora*.” Miss Braslau is a native of New York, where she studied singing with Buzzi-Peccia and Sibella. She appeared with a number of other candidates for positions with the Metropolitan Company, and was successful. She was twenty-two years of age and had never sung in such a large auditorium. Her appearance in “*Boris*” was her first on any stage. Since that time she has grown in art and in favor, and has been heard in most of the largest cities of America.



The most important début, in the season of 1913-14, at the Metropolitan was that of Margarete Arndt-Ober, mezzo soprano, a native of Berlin, who had been singing at the Royal Opera since 1907. She had studied singing in Berlin with Benno Stolzenberg, and piano with Arthur Arndt, whom she married. She made her operatic début in 1906 at Frankfort, as *Azucena*, was at the Stettin Theatre the following season and then at the Royal Opera in Berlin.

Brought to America by Mr. Gatti-Casazza to fill places of contraltos who might be incapacitated, she at once stepped into a place of her own, and has maintained her popularity.

A report of her début as *Ortrud* is most enthusiastic. She proved herself an actress of altogether exceptional penetration and insight,—"For stupendous potency of emotional utterance, for incisiveness of accent, for breadth and impassioned eloquence, for vitriolic asperity, mingled with a grandeur truly regal, this *Ortrud* is probably unsurpassed by any living impersonator of the character."

Also,—“Madame Ober is a large woman and her voice matches her physical proportions in volume. It is a superb organ of true mezzo



quality and extensive compass. Chameleon-like, her voice changes with every subtle modulation of dramatic sentiment, and perfect is the only term that describes the clarity of her enunciation."

Madame Ober was possessed of tremendous dramatic power, and the reviews of her work are crowded with superlatives.

All went well till after the war. At that time the management of the Metropolitan decided to give German opera a holiday, and therefore dispensed with the services of Madame Ober, who brought suit for fifty thousand dollars damages. The case brought up some interesting questions. The defendants held that she could not recover, as she was an alien enemy. Madame Ober claimed that she and her husband were practically Americans, with a house in America and first papers for naturalization. The judge decided that though German, she was not classed as an alien enemy, no complaint having been made against her, and she was entitled to the protection of the courts. The result has escaped the observation of the present writer.

A new Italian tenor, of good repute in his native land, appeared in this season, one Italo

Cristalli. He made his début as *Edgardo* in "Lucia" but was nervous, white-voiced and off pitch. He was not quite so much of a failure as his predecessor, of whom we are told "his impersonation was as colorless as his voice."

A Metropolitan début is a trying ordeal; even Martinelli, who is today considered the leading tenor, met with but a cool reception at first. He made his début in November, 1913, as *Rudolfo* in "La Bohême," and, while one paper reports that he had every reason to expand with pride over an ovation for which even Caruso in his glory might have deigned to be thankful, while enthusiasm was rampant, and flowers were profuse, yet "he forced his tones several times and lapsed occasionally from the pitch."

A year or two later the critics were more kindly,—“He sang *Rhadames* and it was really beautiful.” In short, while he did not make the most satisfactory beginning, he improved and became a great favorite.

Giovanni Martinelli was born near Montagnana, Venice, in 1885. It is recorded that he played the clarinet in a military band, and studied voice under Mandolini. He made his début in Milan as *Ernani*. He soon achieved

success in Italy, Nice and London. He came to America with youth, good stage presence and brilliant voice in his favor and, by hard work, succeeded.

Karl Braun, a bass baritone, made his début at the Metropolitan on February 8, 1913, and displayed a voice of very fine quality, good volume and resonance, also an efficient method of singing, and artistic intelligence. He took such parts as *Sarastro* in "The Magic Flute," *Marcel* in "Les Huguenots," *Pogner* in the "Meistersinger," and *Hagen* in "Götterdämmerung." The reputation which had preceded him was that of a specialist in this latter rôle, and he sang and acted *Hagen* in a manner the equal of which had never before been seen in New York.

Rudolf Berger, a German tenor, appeared at the Metropolitan in February, 1914. Born in Bonn, he studied at the conservatory in that city, and began his career at the Festspielhaus at Bayreuth, where he changed from a baritone to a tenor. He was a man of magnificent proportions, standing six feet four inches. In a review of his work at the Metropolitan it appears that he was a distinctly satisfying *Tristan*,—imposing, knightly, aristocratic. His dra-

matic realization of the part impressed one as rather more satisfactory than was the case with *Siegmond*, or with his *Walther*. His enunciation was very clear and he sang in tune—notable virtues. “His action after taking the love potion was rather unnecessarily restless, and suggested a sudden illness rather than the inception of unconcealable ardor.”

Berger married Madame Marie Rappold in 1913, but not long after he died very suddenly, in fact within half an hour of the time when he had been talking over the phone about the next performance of *Tristan*.

Another noteworthy *Tristan* was Edouardo Ferrari-Fontana, born in Rome in 1878, where his father was a noted physician. He was educated at the University of Rome, and entered the consular service. He made his début at Turin as *Tristan* in 1910, and three years later joined the Metropolitan Company. Before that, however, he appeared in Boston as *Tristan*, and in other poses and, making a success, was “borrowed” by the Metropolitan, and then became a member of the Company. In 1915 he became a member of the Chicago Opera Company. In the same year he also married Marguerite Matzenaur, but the union was dissolved



after a few years. It was during Henry Russell's Paris season with the Boston Opera Company that Ferrari-Fontana made one of the greatest triumphs, as *Otello*, at the Champs Elysées. Then followed his appearance as *Tristan* in Boston, and his further successes in America.

The great war broke out at the beginning of August, 1914, and at that time many of the opera singers were in Europe. Some of them entered the war in the service of their respective nations, but Signor Gatti-Casazza succeeded in one way or another in getting together and bringing to America a goodly company of artists, and opera continued as usual at the Metropolitan Opera House.

For lyric tenor rôles, Luca Botta was added to the Metropolitan Company and made his début as *Rudolfo* in "*La Bohême*." He was considered the best of his kind among the younger Italians of recent years,—“has good presence, acts naturally, is free from mannerisms and does not hold all notes above F to the distraction of discriminating listeners. His voice has a good healthy timbre and carries well.”

Luca Botta was born at Amalfi, Italy, and first heard opera when he was seven years of



age. He became stage-struck, and eventually succeeded, through the doorkeeper of a theatre, in getting a place as super. As he grew up he studied with Vergine, and eventually was offered an opportunity to sing the part of *Turiddu* in "Cavaleria Rusticana" if he could learn it in three days. He did so and was engaged for Malta at a salary of two hundred francs a month. He made his début in 1911 and came to America for the first time in 1912, where he was heard on the Pacific coast. While in San Francisco he attracted the attention of Madame Alda, who was there on a concert tour. Through her influence he was engaged for the Metropolitan Company, making his début on Nov. 21, 1914, with Bori and Scotti in the cast. Botta's career was ended by death, Sept. 29, 1916, the result of an apparently slight accident in 1915.

For heroic tenor parts came Johannes Sembach, who had been associated with Mahler at the Vienna Hofoper from 1903-1907. In fact he declared that Madame Sembach and Gustav Mahler had discovered his voice. While visiting Vienna his wife had suggested that he should see Mahler. He did so, and after a severe test Mahler engaged him, and he made

his début in Pfitzner's opera "Die Rose von Liebesgarten." After 1907 he was called to Dresden. In 1910 he sang at Covent Garden. He studied a year and a half with de Reszké. He appeared at the Metropolitan Opera House as *Parsifal* on November 26, 1914.

The review says that he was warmly greeted, and with good reason,—“As a singer he cannot be said to have greatly distinguished himself. His voice betrays many signs of hard usage, though he is still a young man. His use of the open tone is constant. But he makes up greatly for his want of vocal sensuousness by the intelligence of his delivery, his impeccable enunciation and the emotional directness of his treatment of each phrase. In appearance he is the most satisfactory *Parsifal* seen here in years; as an actor, he is truly distinguished. It was a subtle, persuasive and carefully shaded presentment, a finely wrought portraiture of a spiritual evolution, consistent and steadily cumulative.”

On December 30, 1914, Mabel Garrison appeared at the Metropolitan as *The Page* in "Les Huguenots," and sang "with a voice of delicious purity, brilliancy, and freshness, of extensive range and considerable flexibility,—a

singer who promises to develop into an artist of notable qualifications."

Miss Garrison, who is Mrs. George Siemonn, is a native of Baltimore, and was educated at Western Maryland College, and the Peabody Institute, studying later with Saenger and Witherspoon. She made her début as *Philine* in "Mignon" at the Boston Opera House, and toured with the Theodore Thomas Orchestra. She joined the Metropolitan Opera in 1913, and had, at first, to be content with small parts.

She had her opportunity again when, owing to indisposition, Frieda Hempel was unable to sing in "The Magic Flute" and Miss Garrison filled the rôle admirably. "She refrained from forcing her voice and so retained its resonance and loveliness of quality, and delivered the two great arias with delightful facility and true brilliancy of execution."

Again, in 1917, she had to sing at short notice in the place of Barrientos, when she did the Mad Scene in "Lucia" and proved herself a first rate coloratura soprano.

Elizabeth Schumann, imported from Germany, disclosed a voice of considerable beauty, and took secondary parts with some success

during the season of 1914-15. She made her début as *Sophie* in "Rosenkavalier."

The chief event of March, 1915, was the début of Melanie Kurt, who came to take the place left vacant by the withdrawal of Olive Fremstad. Born in Vienna, she studied piano with Leschetiszky and won a medal and the Liszt prize, and appeared as a concert pianist at the age of seventeen. She studied singing with Marie and Lilli Lehmann and made her début as *Elizabeth* in "Tannhäuser" at Lübeck in 1903. Then she sang a year in Leipzig, three years in Brunswick, and five years at the Royal Opera in Berlin, besides touring Austria, Hungary, Germany and Belgium and singing at Covent Garden. In 1909 she married Max Deri of Vienna.

Appearing at the Metropolitan on February 1, 1915 as *Isolde* in "Tristan und Isolde," she was at once recognized as an artist of superior merit. "The new artist" writes a critic, "has the self-evident advantage of youth, and beautiful tone, a distinguished presence, ease of bearing, and grace of movement. She reminds one in many ways of Berta Morena. Vocally she far surpasses that estimable but uneven artist. Large in volume, wide in compass, reson-



ant save in its lower tones, her voice has the ring of youthful freshness and a timbre rich, rather than brilliant. She sang the highest passages of *Isolde* with gratifying assurance, and generally with success. She disclosed a fine command of legato style and, on the whole, a sensitive feeling for the melodic curve."

Another critic writes,—“Her voice is a great, pure, perfectly handled soprano. Her high notes are taken with perfect ease, they ring out apparently without effort. Her *Isolde* bore comparison well with her predecessors. Regal and lovely in her presence, intellectual in her acting, singing with lovely quality and perfect diction, her performance will linger long in memory. Her *Kundry*—sinister, demoniac, sullen, alternating impassivity with vicious impulse—held the audience from the first. Her “fearful cry” at *Klingsor’s* summons was bloodcurdling, also her devilish laughter.” He goes on to say that one gains the same impression of her personality, on meeting her, as from her artistic achievements,—one of restrained strength, of simplicity and modesty. She is a very beautiful woman.

Madame Kurt was heard in all the Wagnerian rôles, and many Italian operas; she also



created the part of *Iphégénie* in the revival of Gluck's "Iphégénie in Tauris," in 1916.

On January 31, 1916, Maria Barrientos, a young Spanish soprano, made her Metropolitan début as *Lucia* and created some excitement. She received a dozen curtain calls at the end of the first act, and after the mad scene pandemonium broke forth.

Maria Barrientos was born in Barcelona, Spain, and was trained as a violinist and pianist. At an advanced period of her musical studies her health compelled her to seek recreation. She tried singing, and started on her career as a singer with a thorough musical training and understanding of the greatest things in musical literature. She made her début at the Teatro Novedados in Barcelona on March 4, 1889, at the age of fourteen, as *Inez* in "L'Africaine," and soon appeared at Milan, making her début at La Scala as *Lakmé*. She appeared at many other houses and spent some years in South America, until 1913. In 1907 she married George Keene in Barcelona. Oscar Hammerstein intended to get her for the Lexington Ave season, but his plans were frustrated, and Gatti-Casazza secured her, after she had retired from the stage for three years.

The account of her New York début records that "her voice is amazingly small . . . but possesses resonance and carrying power, and she can emit *ppp* tones that float like feather-down to the furthest reaches of the house. A typical coloratura voice, flexible to a degree and in the quality of tones often flute-like, with all that this quality implies. Like Tetrazzini's it is not particularly susceptible to color. It pleases nevertheless by its smoothness and fineness of texture. The equalization of the scales is not perfect, and certain tones sung in the throat result in a white and reedy medium quality. Nothing in her work affords greater pleasure than the infallible certainty of her intonation, attaining high E flat without effort."

She appeared as *Rosina* at the centennial performance of "Il Barbière" and bettered the impression made at her previous appearance, and showed how deliciously she could swell and diminish a tone of dizzy altitude.

As *Gilda* also she "uttered the highest flights of its coloratura with that feathery lightness, that delicacy and exquisitely wrought detail work, with which she enchanted her hearers from the first."

It is said that when Madame Barrientos made her début in Milan she looked so young that her mother was obliged to show her birth certificate.

An American soprano who came to the front in this season was Edith Mason, a native of St. Louis. After studying in the schools of Philadelphia, Washington and Cincinnati she went abroad and became a pupil of Enrico Bertram. Returning to America, she continued her musical studies and then went to Paris under Edouard Clement. She sang in Nice and Marseilles and then continued studies in Italy under Vanzo and Cottone. She was to have sung at the Opera Comique in Paris, but the war prevented, so she returned to New York and joined the Metropolitan company, making her début as *Sophie* in "Rosenkavalier," in which part she won immediate favor. Then she appeared as *Gretel*, in "Hänsel and Gretel," and sang the music with delightful freedom and freshness, and acted with exuberance. Then followed the *Page* in "The Masked Ball" and *Micaela* in "Carmen," *Musetta* in "La Bohême," and *Ah Yoe* in "L'Oracolo" in which she was called upon at short notice on account of Bori's illness. In 1917 she went to Cen-

tral America and Havana, and then joined La Scala company for a transcontinental tour.

Giuseppe de Luca is an Italian baritone who appeared at the Metropolitan in December, 1915, in "Il Barbière." He is a singer of great versatility. Italian works are his favorites but he also sings some Wagnerian parts. He showed skill as a comedian of lightest, deftest touch, irreproachable good taste and facile, but unfailing dramatic method. Without striking features or imposing presence he is nevertheless a figure of unmistakable distinction. His voice is flexible, skillfully handled and delightful in quality, and easily filled the Metropolitan Opera House.

De Luca is a native of Rome, and his vocal schooling began when he was fifteen. His teacher at the conservatory was Persichini. He was a little over twenty when he made his début at Piacenza in "Faust." Before coming to America he had sung eight seasons at La Scala, eleven at Buenos Ayres, three in London, besides appearing in Rome, Barcelona, Vienna, Bucharest, Petrograd and Moscow. In Italy he created the baritone rôles in "Griselidis," "Adrienne Lecouvreur" and Franchetti's



“Notte de Leggenda.” Also he was decorated in three countries.

The season of 1916-1917 was much affected by the war, which, however, gave American singers more or less opportunity; two of them, Marie Sundelius and Alice Eversman, making places for themselves in the Metropolitan.

The chief importation was Claudia Muzio, a native of Pavia, Italy, who was educated in Italy and England, and made her début at Arezzo. She sang at Naples, Milan and London before coming to the Metropolitan, where she made her American début on December 4, 1916, in “*Tosca*.” The report of the performance says,—“She is a beautiful person with captivating eyes, fairly mobile and expressive features, a handsome figure and youth, and while, perhaps, not individual in artistic method, is well grounded in stage routine, intelligent, and consistent in device. Her *Tosca* was not without its force. . . . In the main she displayed loveliness of voice and colored her tones with emotional expressiveness.”

In the following March she took the title rôle in “*Loreley*,” when a critic wrote,—“Few, if any, gave proper credit to the wonderful performance of Madame Muzio. It was most ap-



pealing, especially in the first act. From the moment of her entrance, she displayed a charm which was delicious. She sang her music beautifully, artistically, with fine understanding. The applause was tremendous."

Fernando Carpi, who joined the Metropolitan this season, was a law student of Bologna when his voice was discovered. He was twenty-three when he made his début at Fano. He travelled in Russia two years and then returned to Milan. He made a success at Covent Garden in 1909, since which time he had sung in various parts of Europe and South America.

Marie Sundelius was born in Karlstad, Sweden, her maiden name being Sundborg. She made her first appearance as a singer at the age of four. She was brought to America by her parents when ten years of age. They settled in Boston, where the little girl went to school. She did not begin the study of singing in earnest until she was twenty years of age, when she became a pupil of Madame de Berg Lofgren. She soon got a small church position and some concert engagements, and with the proceeds bought herself a piano. She married Dr. G. Sundelius while still quite young, and she became a pupil of Gertrude

Franklin Salisbury. Before going to New York to enter the Metropolitan Company she was soloist at the New Old South Church in Boston, and was very much in demand as a concert singer.

She joined the Metropolitan Company in 1916, and has made steady progress, taking leading parts in several operas, and always appearing with success.

On Thanksgiving Day, in 1916, May Peterson made her début at the Metropolitan Opera House as *Micaela* in "Carmen." Few young singers have received as consistently warm praise from the critics. "She showed herself to be an artist in the management of her voice and sang with charm. Her voice is of good quality, she has good technique, and real intelligence,—and she was rapturously applauded! She is now well known throughout the country.

Miss Peterson's career should be a matter of interest to young singers. Her father was a Methodist clergyman, and as a young girl she helped him in his evangelistic meetings by playing the organ, and singing at his services. At twelve she was organist of her father's church in Oshkosh, Wis. When she was fifteen she

determined to go to Chicago, and she got along there by singing in church and playing accompaniments; she also did a little teaching. She saved up three hundred dollars and went third class to Italy, where she lived very economically, getting her own meals and cooking them over a little oil lamp in her room. She got work as an accompanist, and sang sometimes in the American church in Florence. During an illness she was cared for by the Blue Nuns.

In time she went to Berlin, where she did not get on so well. Through the consulate she heard of a woman nearly blind who wanted some one to read for her, and she got one mark for two hours reading. She also gave lessons in English. George Ferguson, the noted vocal teacher, arranged to give her lessons in exchange for accompaniments, and she learned much through watching his work.

At the end of five years sojourn in Europe she returned to Chicago and sang for Frederick Stock, who advised her to get some operatic reputation, as it would help her in her career as a concert singer. So she returned to Europe, going this time to Paris, and soon got an offer of a début at Vichy. She made similar appearances elsewhere and then came to the Gaieté-

Lyrique and finally to the Opera Comique, under a contract which was terminated by the war. Her subsequent career is well known.

Florence Easton, who made her début at the Metropolitan in December, 1917, was the most important acquisition among sopranos of that season. Previous to joining the Metropolitan Company she had been for a season with the Chicago Company, making her first appearance with them in December, 1916, as "*Brünnhilde*," when she was reported as having "a most ingratiating personality, a voice of lovely quality, sweetness, clearness and great carrying power, thorough understanding of the rôle and graceful acting. Well-versed in the traditions of the Wagner school. Enunciation distinct." Francis Maclennan, her husband, appeared as *Siegfried* and gave a very satisfactory performance. He was easy and spirited in his actions, full-throated in his song.

Madame Easton's first appearance at the Metropolitan was as *Santuzza*, and we are told "the splendid impression made by her vocal art was heightened by the security and authority of her musicianship." She has taken many of the dramatic soprano rôles and has appeared as *Kundry*,—"the finest embodiment of the char-



acter since Olive Fremstad glorified the Metropolitan stage." On this occasion a critic declared "Miss Easton is the greatest, most versatile and practically the most richly dowered artist at the Metropolitan today. Her *Kundry* ranks next to that of Ternina and Fremstad."

Florence Easton is a native of Yorkshire, England, but went, when a child, to Toronto, Canada, with her parents, who were singers. She appeared as a pianist at the age of ten. After the death of her parents she studied singing at the Royal Academy in London under Elliott Haslam, and, following some experience with the Manners Opera Company, she made her début at Covent Garden in 1903 as *Madame Butterfly*. Then followed engagements at the Berlin Royal Opera, Hamburg State Theatre, and in England. She married Francis MacLennan in 1904. They were fellow members of the same company, and sang together. In England Miss Easton created the rôle of *Elektra* when Strauss's opera was produced there, also *Beatrice* in Naylor's "The Angelus," and, in New York, *Elizabeth* in Liszt's "Legend of Elizabeth," when given in operatic form. Also she was the first woman to be made a fellow of the Royal Academy of Music in London.



The most noteworthy contralto of the season was Julia Claussen whose maiden name was Ohlson and who was born in Stockholm, Sweden, and educated at the Royal Academy of Music in that city, and at the Royal High School for Music in Berlin. She married Captain T. C. F. Claussen in 1901, and in 1903 made her début at Stockholm as *Leonora* in "La Favorita." She remained in that theatre till 1912 when she went to the Stadt-theatre, Stuttgart. She was at Covent Garden, and the Champs Elysées in Paris in 1914, but was with the Chicago Opera Company from 1912 to 1917, when she was engaged by the Metropolitan Company. She is described as "a dark, vibrant contralto of great voluptuousness in the head and chest tones." She made her New York début as *Dalila*.

Cecil Arden, a contralto, was the youngest member of the company, a pupil of Buzzi-Pecchia, and is gaining favor each year.

Hippolito Lazaro, a Spanish tenor, made his début as the *Duke* in "Rigoletto" in February, 1918. He had a beautiful voice, but little sense of delicacy or art.

Thomas Chalmers is an American baritone who joined the Metropolitan Company in this

season. He is a native of New York and was engaged in the real estate business until he had progressed in the vocal art sufficiently for public work. In 1909 he went to Florence and studied for two years with Lombardi, making his début in "La Bohème" as *Marcello* in 1911. He was engaged by Henry W. Savage to sing *Jack Rance* in his production of "The Girl of the Golden West." After touring from coast to coast, he returned, for further study, to Italy. In 1913 he joined the Century Opera Company, with a repertoire of twenty-three operas, and in 1917 he became a member of the Metropolitan Company.

Jose Mardones, who was in the Boston Opera Company, also joined the Metropolitan in this season.

The opening night of the season 1918-19 was marked by a fervid performance of national airs, which took place between the second and third acts. The curtain rose, the chorus waved flags of the Entente colors, Homer, Cousinou, Caruso and other soloists held flags of their own nationalities, and the stars of the company sang various national anthems.

The sensation of this season was Rosa Ponselle, who made her début on November 15 in

“*La Forza del Destino.*” She was a native of Meriden, Conn., and had never set foot on the operatic stage.

She and her sister Carmela had appeared in a vaudeville house under rather unusual circumstances. They had no suitable clothes for the stage, and persuaded the manager to let them appear in ordinary street clothes. He let them try it, with much trepidation, for one evening. After that they were advertised in electric signs over the theatre door.

Notwithstanding the allurements of vaudeville, William Thorner, her teacher, persuaded Rosa to continue her studies till she was ready for an operatic career, and before long a hearing was obtained. At that time Rosa Ponselle was twenty-one years old. She has the heritage of Italian beauty, and a liquid soprano voice.

Since her début Miss Ponselle has taken leading parts, and has been gaining in stage experience and artistry. She is yet at the beginning of her career. She sang twelve rôles in her first four seasons.

At the same performance of “*La Forza del Destino,*” Alice Gentle made her Metropolitan début. Born in Peoria, Ill., Miss Gentle went



CHARLES HACKETT AS *COUNT ALMAVIDA*





to Seattle and was there a church singer. She went to New York and entered Hammerstein's chorus. After some study in Milan she was engaged for La Scala. Then she returned to New York and made her début with the Metropolitan Company. Since that time she has been in several of the travelling companies. She is, in private life, Mrs. Jacob R. Proebstel.

Charles Hackett, who made his American operatic début at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1918, comes from Worcester, Mass. He studied singing in Boston with Arthur J. Hubbard, and, during his student days, was in business and at the same time sang in churches and filled concert engagements. He was tenor soloist at the Arlington Street church before he went abroad in 1913 to study repertoire and coach for opera in Italy. He made his operatic début at Parma, Italy, in Boito's "Mefistofele," and then appeared in Venice and other places, gaining experience until at Christmas, 1916, he scored a success at La Scala, Milan, in "Mignon." Then followed a tour in Spain, and one in South America.

It was after his return from South America that he was engaged for the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, where he appeared as

*Count Almaviva* in "Il Barbière" and received an ovation.

On this occasion one of the critics wrote as follows,—“Besides a beautiful strength and fullness of tone which is revealed in high notes of an exquisite quality, Mr. Hackett has a flexibility which makes his pianissimo equally beautiful. There is a grace and smoothness in his nuances which will make him undoubtedly one of the favorites of the Metropolitan. Also one cannot fail to notice his dramatic talents. His grace and charm, and his splendid appearance bring at last to the ranks of tenor singers one who can carry well, physically, the rôle of a lover without rudely shocking the artistic. His enunciation throughout was a pleasure and his firm hold upon the vocal texture never once permitted a single tendency to *vibrato*.”

Such was the report of Hackett's American début. In 1921 he returned to Italy and was invited to open the season at La Scala, the first American tenor to whom this honor has been accorded. He was unable to accept the invitation owing to other engagements, though later he made a great hit in that house in "Il Barbière." He also sang at Monte-Carlo and made a triumph as *Cavaradossi* in "Tosca," after

which he sang at the Opera Comique in Paris, the first American tenor, it is said, to sing at that house.

Robert Cousinou, a French baritone, made his début as *Athanaël* in "Thais." His voice is of ample, if not over large, volume, and mellow, sympathetic quality, and he is fully versed in the conventionalities of acting. He came from the Grand Opera of Paris.

Luigi Montesante came from La Scala in Milan and is a native of Palermo. His rise to success was rapid. He visited America in 1914 as a member of the Leonecavallo Opera Company which gave performances in San Francisco. He made an agreeable impression.

In 1919, on November 22, a young Canadian contralto made her début as *Azucena* in "Il Trovatore,"—Jeanne Gordon. She sang also *Brangaene* in "Tristan und Isolde," the *Princess Eboli* in "Don Carlos," *Amneris* in "Aïda," and *Fatima* in "Oberon." She also created the part of the *Fairy Beryline* in Wolff's "Blue Bird" and *Mardion* in Hadley's "Cleopatra's Night."

Miss Gordon is, in private life, Mrs. Ralph Trix. She was trained for opera by Romualilo Sapio, and not only made an instantaneous suc-

cess, but maintained it. As one of the critics said 'It is beyond the power of any human being to put anything into the part of *Azucena*, so that any singer can give only a better or worse performance of it. Miss Gordon's was better. Her voice is a very beautiful one, rich in the lower register without being over colored, and clear in the upper. Also she knows how to act, and has the unusual ability of making her gestures follow the contour of the music,—a remarkable piece of work for a débutante, and would have been very fine for a singer of long experience.'

She is now, in 1922, one of the leading contraltos of the Metropolitan Opera Company. A woman of commanding presence.

Giulio Crimi, an Italian tenor, who joined the Metropolitan in 1918, proved acceptable in Italian rôles. He has a light voice of appealing quality and an admirable *bel canto* style.

Beniamino Gigli was called the greatest living tenor in Italy and achieved considerable success at the Metropolitan.

More American singers appear to have been taken into the Metropolitan Company each year. Some of them have had their opportunity, and some have had to begin with small parts or



wait. In 1920, William Gustafson of Cambridge, Mass., appeared as *Titurel* in "Parsifal." He sang the few measures with sonorous round tone and expressive nobility. Since then he has been assigned more important rôles, and has acquired distinction. He was a pupil of Willard Flint of Boston.

Marion Telva, contralto, of St. Louis, appeared on December 31, 1920, in "Manon Lescaut" and later in other parts—*Brangaene*, *Lola*, *Mercedes*, etc. She is the daughter of H. J. Taucke of St. Louis, and studied singing in that city under Eugenia Getner. On the advice of Madame Schumann-Heink she sought her fortune in New York, and after eighteen months' study with Madame Mihr-Hardy got her opportunity at the Metropolitan.

Mario Chamlee, a tenor, born in Los Angeles, had sung in his home city with "La Scala" opera company, making his début as *Nicias* in "Thais." He then got into vaudeville and worked his way east, did some coaching and sang at the Rialto for fourteen weeks. He was then drafted into the artillery. After demobilization he was a member of Antonio Scotti's opera company for two seasons and then got his opportunity at the Metropolitan.



In March, 1921, there was a novelty in the way of a South American Indian, one Capoulican, who appeared in "The Polish Jew" as the *Innkeeper*. Capoulican had a French mother and was educated in Paris. "He had a baritone voice, vibrant and big, but overcharged with vibrato. His acting had much vigor and no small measure of sincerity—unpolished effectiveness."

There was also a Chilian baritone, one Zannelli, who had a pleasing and lyrical, but very small voice.

The advent of Marie Jeritza in December, 1921, was the greatest sensation for several years. She came from Vienna, and is the wife of Baron Popper. On her return in April, 1922, from her New York season the Viennese went wild over her and gave her a tremendous reception.

She made her American début in "Tosca" on December 1, 1921. There was no doubt about her triumph though there was some variety of detail in the criticisms. A critic says,—"It is indisputable that Madame Jeritza's impersonation of *Tosca* is one of the most touching and dramatic in the history of the opera. To find analogy for her histrionism one

must revert to Milka Ternina, creator of the title rôle in this country. But the blonde *Tosca* of Marie Jeritza combines the visual loveliness of Emma Eames with the dramatic and subjective endowment of the German soprano. The latest *Tosca* succeeded as have few of her predecessors in the part in lifting an ingenious melodrama to the plane of thrilling tragedy."

Another report says, 'In appearance Madame Jeritza suggests a blonde *Sieglinde* rather than the tawny *Tosca*, whose dark Roman beauty has become associated with the part. Very quickly, however, the Jeritza acting made one forget the color of her hair, for she revealed so much facial expressiveness, impetuosity, coquetry and romantic allurements that she held the audience spellbound." Very little in this about her singing, but he does admit that—"Madame Jeritza's singing had lovely lyrical quality in the sentimental passages and dramatic strength and passion when the more exacting moments came."

In brief, Madame Jeritza is a great singing actress, and her first season at the Metropolitan established her as one of the chief favorites.

In March, 1922, a Spanish coloratura soprano, Angeles Ottein, appeared at the Metro-

politan as *Rosina* in "Il Barbière." Her first appearance in America was with the Scotti Company on the West coast, in 1921. Her second appearance in New York was as *Gilda* in "Rigoletto."

The report reads to us—"Dark, plump, quick of motion and broad of smile, she was as active on the stage as she was merry and coquettish. Vocally she provokes wonder, if not always delight, by vaulting to heights beyond the usual reach of such voices. Her staccato was particularly clean cut and facile; indeed hers seemed almost a staccato voice. Virtually none of the many sky-rocketing phrases sung by her were of gratifying sound, and some even tempted smiles."

Alice Miriam, who joined the Metropolitan two years before, got her opportunity, through the illness of Bori, to sing the title rôle of "Snegourotchka" on February 4, and proved herself ready for the test. It was an impressive demonstration of real talent, so we are told, and she acted the part with surety and finish.

Giuseppe Danise, who became a member of the Metropolitan Company during this season, was educated at the Naples Conservatory. He sang at La Scala in Milan where he created sev-

eral important rôles. He was first a lawyer, and then took to music.

The end of the season of 1921-22 completed fourteen years of Mr. Gatti-Casazza's management of the Metropolitan Opera House, and, while this book is devoted to singers, it is well to give a short review of Mr. Casazza's achievements. About one hundred and fifty works were staged, of which about one hundred were novelties or revivals, and approximately fifty of them had never been sung in America before. Nine American operas and one American ballet were produced, thus giving the American composer a hearing in his own land.

While there had been sporadic attempts at Russian opera it had been virtually unknown, but several works were put on at the Metropolitan, including Chaikovsky's "Pique Dame," and "Eugen Onegin," Moussorgsky's "Boris Godounov," Rimsky Korsakov's "Coq d'Or" and "Snegourochka," and Borodine's "Prince Igor." Lavish mountings have been the rule and both chorus and orchestra have been brought to a high state of efficiency.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CHICAGO OPERA ASSOCIATION

1912-1922

ANDREAS DIPPEL was director of the Chicago-Philadelphia Opera Company in 1912. He resigned the following year, and was succeeded by Cleofonte Campanini, who had been director at the Manhattan Opera House in New York from 1906 to 1909, and then principal conductor of the Chicago-Philadelphia Company, as it was then called.

With this company Tito Ruffo, an Italian baritone, made his American début in Philadelphia on November 4, 1912, as *Rigoletto*. As one of the musical journals reported, his début was an event which seemed to stir imperturbable and slow going Philadelphia to its deepest depths, and Ruffo received a storm of applause. His reputation as *Rigoletto* had preceded him, and was justified by his performance, for, aside from his remarkable vocal equipment, he was also a revelation as an actor.



“His voice, a baritone that ranges unusually high, is of lovely quality, smooth and mellow. It reflects every emotion sounded by him in his marvellously intelligent and faithful reproduction.”

He appeared also in “Un Ballo in Maschera” in Philadelphia, and, on November 19, gave his only performance for the season in New York with the Metropolitan company, when he sang *Hamlet*. This was considered a bold undertaking, for many noted singers had essayed “Hamlet” and failed to make the opera popular. The critic of the Tribune omits any criticism of Ruffo’s singing on that occasion, but says “the bare announcement of his name filled the house to suffocation, and when he sang the drinking song hundreds of people grew frantic in their exhibition of delight.”

Tito Ruffo was born at Pisa in 1878 and was educated at the St. Cecilia Conservatory in Rome, where he was a pupil of Persichini, and later of Cassini in Milan. It is said that he was dismissed from the St. Cecilia Conservatory and advised to give up singing, but Cassini taught him gratuitously, and in 1898 he made his début at the Costanzi Theatre in Rome, as the *Herald* in “Lohengrin.” He gained his

first successes in South America, and then returned to Italy and appeared in several theatres with success. In 1905 he sang at La Scala, in Milan, and in 1912, when he sang with Caruso in Paris, he made a great sensation.

During the past ten years he has appeared many times in America, and has become one of the most popular of opera singers.

In November, 1913, Campanini presented a young soprano, Rosa Raisa, then twenty years of age. She appeared in Philadelphia with the Chicago company, singing the part of *Queen Isabella* in "Cristoforo Colombo" with Tito Ruffo in the title rôle. The part is a small one, but the report says "the young Italian soprano used her limited opportunity to good advantage . . . and sang the 'Vision' aria fluently and satisfactorily."

Rosa Raisa, however, is not Italian. She was born in Ballystock, Poland, and travelled over Poland as a child singer. When she was fourteen years of age there was a pogrom, but she managed to escape from Poland and she reached Naples, where she was befriended by a family who were lovers of music and who soon noticed the quality of her voice as she sung Russian folk songs. She was placed under Ma-

dame Barbara Marchisio at the conservatory at St. Pietro a Majella.

She was brought to the notice of Campanini and her début took place at the Verdi Centenary at Parma in one of the operas of Verdi's early period, "Oberto Conte di San Bonifacio," originally produced in 1839. She then came with Campanini to America and was a member of the Chicago Opera Association for two seasons, after which she was away for two years.

In 1914 she appeared at Covent Garden, and in the same year created the part of the title rôle in Zandonai's "Francesca di Rimini" at the Costanza, at Rome, repeating it at La Scala in 1916. She also sang in South America before returning to Chicago.

Few singers have caused more discussion among critics. When she sang *Leonora*, in "Il Trovatore" in Chicago (1918) with Dolci, the report says she sang divinely, and, in combination with Dolci, it was almost beyond description.

In 1920, in a revival of "Norma,"—"In the singing of Rosa Raisa were paired splendor and crudity, rudeness and exaltation. Such vocalism is received with an incessant conflict of emotions. Beyond question this voice has not

its equal in America today. . . . Of what marvellous *bel canto* possibilities if she will only tutor herself to the eradication of the faults, and curb somewhat the conflagration of her temperament. Such moments of incredible magnificence as the final appeal to *Orovesco*, and outpouring of golden tonal fire, vibrant with an emotion beyond the reach of words, almost earned pardon for prior flaws. . . . Raisa must be accepted as a striking and noble personality with a gorgeous voice which she may not always use with discretion . . . withal she compels attention and arouses enthusiasm."

In 1922 she completed her sixth consecutive year with the Chicago Opera Association. In 1920 she married Giacomo Rimini, a baritone of the same company. She is a singer to be heard.

Madame Louise Berat, a French contralto, joined the Chicago Company the same season as Rosa Raisa and remained two years. She returned to France in 1915 to enlist in the Red Cross service, and returned a year later to the Chicago Company. Madame Berat had appeared at all the leading opera houses in France and had created the rôle of the *Mother* in "Louise" at Covent Garden.



Cyrena van Gordon who joined the Chicago Opera Association in 1913, making her début on Nov. 29 as *Amneris*, is a native of Camden, O., near Cincinnati, and her real name is Pock. She had all her musical training in Cincinnati where she was a pupil of Madame Dotti. She never studied in Europe, but was engaged by Campanini and had to learn *Amneris*, *Azucena*, *The Queen* in "Hamlet", *Fricka* and *Ortrud* in order to make a start. She has imposing stage presence and admirable authority of manner, though she had no lessons in acting. She steadily grew and some of the later reports are excellent; for instance, in 1920, after a performance of "Il Trovatore" we find, "Her voice, with its youthful exuberance and tonal glory, dominated the scene," and in 1921, after her appearance as *Brünnhilde*, "She showed herself in every bit of acting, every fragment of music, a mature artist, one of the most brilliant *Brünnhildes*."

Myrna Sharlow is a native of Jamestown, No. Dak., but went to Louisville, and studied singing there and in New York and Boston. Her first stage experience was gained at the Knickerbocker Theatre in New York, but she joined the Boston Opera Company in 1912 and ap-



peared in small parts. She was assigned the part of *Mimi* at a popular priced Saturday evening performance, and took that part in the same company when Melba was to have sung it and was indisposed. She has a full, fresh soprano voice, with a character of its own. It has much sensuous beauty. She was not more than twenty years of age when she made her first success in opera. She joined the Chicago Company after the collapse of the Boston Company.

In January, 1914, Florence Macbeth made her first appearance with the Chicago Opera Company as *Rosina* in "Il Barbière." In the preliminary announcements it was stated that she was a young singer from the West who would acquire international reputation soon. She was pretty as a picture, twenty-two years old, and seems to have conquered the hearts of the European public. The prophecy has been fulfilled.

Miss Macbeth is a native of Mankato, Minn., and was educated at St. Mary's Hall, Fairbault, Minn. She took singing lessons with Mrs. Snyder in St. Paul and then became a pupil of Yeatman Griffith in Pittsburgh and later in Europe. She made her operatic début at

Darmstadt, as *Gilda* in January, 1913, where she was offered a contract for five years, but refused it as she did not want to spend all her time in Germany. She had no foreign teacher except an Italian who coached her in opera.

In November, 1914, she appeared in New York with the Century Opera Company as *Olympia* in "The Tales of Hoffmann"; but she returned to the Chicago Company when it resumed operations. In addition to her operatic work Miss Macbeth has been heard with most of the leading musical societies in concert. In 1921, before the Chicago Company's New York season ended, she sang *Ophelia*, with Ruffo as *Hamlet*, and received a great ovation. In fact, it is reported that the audience called her out again and again and insisted on her singing "Annie Laurie," which was flattering, if inconsistent.

Miss Macbeth's voice is a coloratura soprano of delightfully pure quality, and she has made sensational successes with Mozart arias.

Louise Edvina, whose maiden name was Martin, is a dramatic soprano who joined the Boston Opera Company, in 1911, appeared with the Metropolitan Opera Company in 1915, mak-

ing her New York début as *Tosca*, and her Chicago début Nov. 16, 1916, as *Louise*, which is said to be her favorite rôle.

Madame Edvina is a native of Montreal, where she was educated at the convent of the Sacred Heart. She studied singing in Paris with Jean de Reszke and made her operatic début at Covent Garden in 1908 as *Marguerite* in "Faust." She appeared at Covent Garden each season till 1914, and was a member of the Boston Opera Company from 1911 till 1913. She sings most of the modern French rôles, and created the parts of *Fiora* in Montemezzi's "L' Amore del Tre Re" and *Francesca* in Zandonai's "Francesca da Rimini" when they were given at Covent Garden. On the occasion of her New York début a critic wrote, "A single act of *Tosca* abundantly vindicated her right to the most solicitous consideration, and at the close of the opera one could but wonder that she had remained away from New York so long."

Madame Marguerite Beriza, who was engaged by Campanini, and appeared in Oct. 1915, had also been a member of the Boston Company in 1913-1914. She was born in England but educated in France, studying music at Mar-

seilles where she took first prize for pianoforte at the Conservatoire. She made her operatic début at the Opera Comique in 1907, and sang in Brussels and Buenos Ayres before coming to Boston. She was considered a dramatic soprano and sang such parts as *Louise*, *Tosca* and *Santuzza*. She was graceful, animated, dramatically intelligent, a better actress than singer. Her upper tones are shrill and thin, but she has the gift of individualizing any rôle she undertakes.

There was no opera in Chicago during the season 1914-1915, but things went on as usual the following year and a rather unusually large number of new singers appeared.

Alice Verlet (van der Hyde), a Belgian singer, made her début with the Chicago company as *Filina* in "Mignon." She is a native of Belgium and was educated there. She was touring America in 1914 and 1915 and joined the Chicago Opera Company. Her voice is brilliant, of silver-like quality, and at her début she made a very fine impression, and had fifteen curtain calls. She was with the company only one season.

Mrs. Rachel Frease-Green, who had been abroad for four years, singing in London, Paris



and Berlin, returned to her native land and joined the Chicago company. She had made her début in London as *Sieglinde* in "Die Walküre." In Berlin she created the part of *Cleopatra* in Enna's opera of that name.

Conchita Supervia, a young Spanish soprano, made her début as *Charlotte* in "Werther," and is recorded as a comely young woman with a voice which has carrying power and a fresh youthful quality, pleasant to hear.

Marcia van Dresser, a native of Memphis, Tenn., made her début as *Elisabeth* in "Tannhäuser" in a performance which was characterized by good traditional training. Her voice is of rich, warm quality and her acting is finished.

Miss van Dresser's first engagement was with the "Bostonians." She was then quite young. Augustin Daly advised her to take up the dramatic profession, and she appeared in "The Great Ruby" at Daly's Theatre, New York, and was for three years in a theatrical company. Then Conried heard her sing and urged her to abandon drama for opera, and she was soon at the Metropolitan in small parts. Advised next by Ternina and Mottl, she went abroad, and, after three years study, got an en-



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gagement at the Dresden Royal Opera, where she remained for two years and sang twenty rôles. She was next at the Municipal Opera at Frankfort till the war broke out, when she returned to America and joined the Chicago Company for a year.

In 1915 two noted tenors joined the Chicago Company, Ferrari-Fontana, and Lucien Muratore. The former has already been mentioned as a member of the Boston and Metropolitan companies.

Muratore, also, first appeared in Boston, but, when the war broke out, he was called to the colors, served in the army and did not get back to America till Jan. 1916.

Born at Marseilles, he studied at the Conservatory and graduated with prizes for solfeggio and diction in the musical and dramatic departments. At the age of twenty he appeared in "juvenile leads" at the Variété, in Paris, and a year later at the Casino at Monte Carlo. The following year he was leading man with Madame Réjane at the Odéon in Paris. In the mean time he had continued the study of singing, and when he entered the opera he had the poise and experience of a finished actor. His operatic début occurred at the Opera Comique.

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Soon afterwards he was engaged for the Paris Grand Opera, and appeared in Gluck's "Armide." Many leading rôles were assigned to him, and Campanini captured him for Chicago. But the war broke out and he served with the colors till he was discharged on Sept. 17, 1915, and when his health was restored he resumed his career as a singer, joining the Chicago Company.

He is a man of splendid physique, of commanding presence, fashioned by nature for rôles of heroism and romantic exploit and, as one critic says, "his art permits him to assume with success any rôle short of a decapitated midget."

A writer in *Musical America* says,—“He is a great actor, but he is also a great singer. The last dozen years have only one other instance of a like equilibrium achieved and maintained between so great a beauty of vocal and dramatic expression,—I refer to Olive Fremstad. To me Muratore's voice is the most thrilling I know. . . . Never sensual, Muratore's art possesses that fascinating quality of sensuous refinement,—of passion thrice intensified because of the kind of restraint its imaginative delicacy imposes on it.”

Another critic says, "Muratore has a full and noble voice which is not skillfully employed. As a singer he is wholly without finesse. In *forte* passages its trumpet quality and resonance stir the audience."

His repertoire includes most of the modern French operas.

Alfred Maguenat, a French baritone, made his début at a Saturday matinée as *Guido* in "Monna Vanna" at Chicago, and disclosed a voice of fine texture, finished style and authority.

Maguenat is a native of Paris, of Swiss parentage. He was educated to be a painter and, while studying in the Latin quarter of Paris, was urged by his fellow students to cultivate his voice. In 1907, after two years of study, he made his début at the Opera Comique. In 1914 he created the rôle of *Marc Anthony* at Monte Carlo. He was singing *Escamillo* in Paris when Campanini heard him and engaged him for Chicago, where he has been a very valuable member of the company.

Giulio Crimi, a tenor, made his Chicago début as *Rhadames* in "Aïda," and at the same performance, Nov. 13, 1916, Giacomo Rimini, baritone, appeared as *Amonasro*.

Crimi comes from Catania where he got his education by means of scholarships, and later earned his living by acting as a copyist in his spare hours. He took the government examination for telegraph and post office, and was the first of one thousand students. Then his voice was discovered by Matteo Aderno, and in due course he appeared as an opera singer, making his début at Treviso in "Le Wally" in 1913. He also created the parts of *Paolo* in Zandonai's "Paolo and Francesca," and *Hein-nec* in an Aztec opera of that name by an Argentine composer. He sang at Covent Garden, Madrid and Milan, also South America before coming to this country.

Both Crimi and Rimini have remained members of the Chicago Company for some years, and Rimini married Rosa Raisa.

The sensation of the decade was the introduction to the American public of Amelita Galli-Curci in Chicago, and in New York. In fact a New York critic wrote, "Galli-Curci comes nearer perfection than any soprano heard during the present generation.

Amelita Galli was born at Milan, Italy, and educated at the Liceo Alessandro Manzoni, from which she was graduated with first honors as





Study by George M. Kessler, B. P.

AMELITA GALLI-CURCI AS *LAKMÉ*





a linguist. She received her musical education at the Conservatory in Milan, graduating as a pianist. She is said to have had no vocal training whatever, but to have secured a hearing at the Costanzi through the influence of Gennaro Curci, whose brother she married. She sang "Caro Nome" and secured a contract, making her début in "Rigoletto" at the Costanzi, in Rome, in 1910. Then followed six years of singing in the theaters of Europe and in South America where she was in the same company with Caruso, Tito Ruffo and Rosa Raisa. It is said that she was denied a hearing in New York, the Metropolitan Company being full. It is also reported that Campanini had almost to be forced to give her a hearing, which he did through the intercession of Rosa Raisa. But on hearing her he immediately engaged her, and she made her American début in Chicago on Nov. 18, 1916, singing *Gilda* in "Rigoletto." Although she made a wonderful success as *Gilda* it was surpassed when she appeared as *Lucia*,—"She sings and acts with an artistic insight which makes her delineations stand forth with striking distinction."

The critic of "The Theatre" wrote in 1917, "Opinion places Galli-Curci in the group with

Melba, Sembrich and Tetrazzini. Her voice, three octaves in range, is admitted to be more pure and beautiful than that of Tetrazzini, while she is able to vocalise with the same consummate skill as Sembrich. She is an unusually intelligent actress as well as a great singer, bringing poise and sincerity into each of her characterizations. Her *Juliet*, *Gilda*, *Lucia*, *Violetta*, *Lakmé*,—each is a well-rounded, adroitly finished portrait, a living creation of fascinating or commanding, or romantic womanhood. She speaks six languages, has intellect, charm and vivacity of mind.”

“Mephisto” in *Musical America* commented thus,—“Much of Galli-Curci’s success, I think, is due to her absolute simplicity and naturalness. She has that rare quality, the ability to conceal her art. She is wholly unaffected. Her voice is steady, flutelike in quality. She never forces a tone. Many of the finest points are so delicate as to escape all except those who know. If I were to compare Galli-Curci with Patti I should say that Patti had a wonderfully calculated, artificial, piquant way about her which was felt in her singing and particularly in her acting. Galli-Curci, on the other hand presents the character which she plays, and

submerges her personality in that character, by doing which she shows versatility."

The story of her New York début, at the Lexington Opera House on Jan. 6, 1918, is quite thrilling. She appeared in "Dinorah" and the first part of the performance brought out no demonstration. But when she concluded the "Shadow Song," all restraint vanished. There broke out a "mad frenzy of delight positively terrifying in its wildness, a typhoon of hysterical approbation such as is seldom given one to witness more than once in a decade. Nothing equal to it since the début of Tetrizzini. Yells, inarticulate cries, stamping, waving of handkerchiefs, etc., made a picture of indescribable elation." She was recalled more than twenty times.

Much more might be written of Galli-Curci had we space. She is undoubtedly the most popular singer of this day. In 1920 she got a divorce from her husband, the Count, and soon after married her accompanist, Homer Samuels, of Minneapolis.

On January 15, 1916, a Russian soprano, Maria Kousnezoff, made her début at Chicago as *Juliet*, when the reviewer wrote,—“Of her art only praise may be recorded. Her voice has a

very pleasing liquid quality with the freshness of youth, and though not as flexible as the voices of some of the famous coloratura singers of the day, it is of great charm and very well produced. "Her *petite*, girlish figure and very graceful manner helped much to make her interpretation convincing."

Again, when she appeared as *Thais*, she received much praise, and was considered a valuable acquisition.

She is the wife of José La Salle, a well known conductor, who is also her coach. Her father was a noted painter, and she had a very thorough education at Petrograd. She was acclaimed in Russia both as a singer and a dancer. She was also well received in Spain, Paris and London.

In Chicago she took the part of *Cleopatra* at the *première* of that opera, a part which she created when it was first produced at Monte Carlo, and which was considered peculiarly suited to her. Her voice has not great power, but has dramatic intensity and firmness of timbre. At this performance Alfred Mague-nat took the part of *Marc Antony* and "came into his own," singing with fine distinction and authority.



Lydia Lindgren, a young Swedish singer, and pupil of Frau Niklass-Kemper, appeared in February, and was declared to be at the beginning of a brilliant career.

Irene Pavlowska, a native of Montreal, who had sung with the Montreal and Boston companies, became a favorite in Chicago. She had been sent abroad on the advice of Madame Albani, and studied with Duvernoy and Badelli in Paris.

Genevieve Vix, who made her American début in Chicago, in December, as *Jean* in "*Le Jongleur*," made a very charming little juggler and the audience liked her. Besides looking the part Miss Vix acted it superbly, and her voice is clean, sweet and of highly pleasing quality, so says the report.

Miss Vix is a native of Brittany, and was awarded the first prize for opera at the Conservatoire in 1904, making her début at the Opera in 1905, since which time she had an active career in France, Spain and South America. She was followed to America by Prince Cyril Narishkin, and, after they had managed to prove divorces from their previous spouses, they were married in New York in 1918.

Frances Peralta, a soprano, appeared as

*Leonora* in "Il Trovatore" at a Saturday night performance and made a good impression. Her voice is big and smooth and she sang with authority. She is a native of San Francisco. She studied there and in New York, Paris and Milan, and sang in Italy for a season, after which she returned to America and appeared in light opera. She then joined the Boston Opera Company, of which she was a member for two seasons. In 1920 she made her New York debut at the Metropolitan as *Elena* in "Mefistofele" and met with approval.

Carolina Lazzari, who appeared in a minor rôle in November, 1917, is an American of Italian parentage. Born in New York she studied singing in that city with Wm. S. Brady, after being educated at the Ursuline Convent of St. Ambrozio at Milan.

She has a voice of great range, including four Cs, of warm sympathetic quality and unusual charm. In Dec. 1918, she sang *Delila* when, we are told, her singing deserved the adjective "gorgeous." In December, 1920, she appeared at the Metropolitan as *Amneris* in "Aïda" with considerable distinction.

Anna Fitziu, soprano, who joined the Chicago Company in 1917, is a native of Virginia,

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studied singing in Chicago, and went into light opera there. Then she went to Paris and became a pupil of William Thorner, made her début in Milan as *Elsa* in "Lohengrin," and then had engagements at many of the opera houses in Italy and other countries. She has a large repertoire, and in Chicago created the part of *Azora* in Henry Hadley's opera of that name.

In the following season, 1918-1919, there were many new singers.

Dora Gibson, a native of Durham, England, who had made her début at Covent Garden, created the rôle of *Isabeau* in Roze's "Joan of Arc."

Dorothy Jardon, who sang the "Princess Fedora" handled fine vocal resources artistically, and showed skill in acting.

Marguerite Namara, who had been a member of a light opera company, is a native of Cleveland, O., and after studying in Paris with Jean de Reszke, made her début as *Marguerite* in "Faust" at Genoa.

There was also Marthe Chenal, from the Opera Comique; Vixa Amazar, from Petrograd; and Yvonne Gall, from the Paris Opera.

Miss Gall's first appearance was as *Manon*, which she sang in a lovely manner, but she was

considered too placidly amiable for the character. But she gave a noteworthy performance of *Salome* in 1919, and sang with rare beauty, depth of feeling and expression. Again, in 1920, she gave an impersonation of *Tosca* which was reported as rather less sophisticated and worldly-wise, and more sincere and spontaneous than the traditional impersonation. And when she sang *Toinette* in "Le Chemineau," she was declared to be in the front rank of French artists of today.

Marguerite Sylva also appeared as *Carmen* after five years' absence from America. She is a Belgian and made her début at the Opera Comique. She had sung much in light opera but had sung at the Metropolitan and in Chicago. She married Bernard Smith of the Aviation Corps.

There was a plentiful supply of tenors. Guido Ciccolini, a boyishly handsome young man with a lovely, fresh, glowing voice and an engaging manner, sang the rôle of *Alfred* in an entirely romantic, manly and winsome manner. He came from the Costanzi Theatre.

Alessandro Dolci (début, Nov. 20) appeared as *Manrico* in "Il Trovatore," and was considered a superb example of the Italian dramatic



tenor. With a voice of lovely, suave quality and enormous power, flexible, invariably true to pitch, he can whip out high notes with the greatest ease. When he appeared in New York he was classified as a rejuvenated Caruso, and caused a tumult of enthusiasm. One critic writes, "His voice has a lusty ring and he could, if he desired, easily make his points without obstreperousness. But he elects to pursue the way off strenuosity. Perhaps he will quiet down when the strain of his début has departed."

Charles Fontaine made his début as *Des Grieux* when Yvonne Gall made hers as *Manon*, and his chief merit was that his voice was young and ingratiating. Later, as *Faust*, he is said to have "fallen a few degrees short of the statuesquely beautiful pictorial and gorgeous vocal exposition that has been given by one of his predecessors. A good performance, vigorous, youthful and enthusiastic."

John O'Sullivan made his début as *Arnold* in "William Tell" and sang the part in stunning fashion. He is a native of Cork, but was educated in France, graduating from the Paris Conservatoire. He made his début, in 1910, at Geneva. He succeeded Muratore at the Paris



Opera. The Chicago reviewer says that vocally he is like no one else. His voice has something of the tone of a cornet when played by a master.

In 1919, Evelyn Herbert, soprano, made her début in "La Bohême," having never appeared on any stage before. She went from the studio of Gina Ciaparelli-Viaforo in New York, and she made a very favorable impression,—“the natural beauty of her voice, a sweet, high, silvery-toned organ, her demure and winning stage manners, extreme youth, ease and grace won instant recognition. Rarely has a *Mimi* been seen who so completely embodies the character, and her musical delineation was both dramatically and vocally admirable.”

Nina Morgana made her Chicago début in Nov., 1919, as *Lucia* and was reported to have a clear, high voice of good quality and, being a *petite*, dainty person, produced a sympathetic stage picture. She is the wife of Bruno Zirato who was secretary to Caruso.

Borghild Langaard, who made her début in "The Masked Ball," is a Scandinavian soprano who disclosed a rich, powerful dramatic voice, and was well drilled in operatic tradition.

For tenors there were Tito Schipa and Ed-

ward Johnson. Schipa appeared as the *Duke* in "Rigoletto" and made an immediate success. His engaging personality, easy stage manner, graceful movements and dramatic instinct won the audience. His voice is well-placed and evenly produced, a fine rather than robust organ. "Such fluid, liquid singing, such grace of carriage, refinement of manner and dramatic fidelity in delivery has not been seen here in many years," writes a critic.

Schipa is a native of Lecce, Italy. He began the study of voice at the age of fifteen, and, after six years, went to Milan, where he was a pupil of Piccoli for one year. In 1911 he made his début as *Alfredo* in "La Traviata" at Vercelli. Then followed the usual round of Italy, Spain, Portugal and South America. He has been decorated by King Alfonso. He made his New York début in "Sonnabula" with Galli-Curci and was deemed one of the most promising young tenors heard in New York for many a season. In 1920 he returned to America with a wife, whom he had met at Monte Carlo in 1918.

Edward Johnson, who made his début in "Fedora," was well known as a concert singer some years ago. He sang at the Cincinnati Fes-

tival and toured the Middle West with the Chicago Orchestra. Bent on an operatic career, he went to Florence and studied with Lombardi. He made his operatic début at Padua and sang for five years at La Scala and Milan; four years at the Costanzi, in Rome; and made two visits to South America. He is a native of Canada.

His début in Chicago was reported thus,—  
“He is typically American in manner and directness. He instantly won the immense audience with his remarkable vocal powers and acting ability, as *Count Loris*. His opening air, a romanza, was sung with rich, powerful tones and passionate utterance. He kept up his high standard throughout and elicited much enthusiasm.”

Carlo Galeffi, who joined the Chicago Company in 1919, had been a member of the Boston Company, when his singing was distinguished by boisterousness. He is a man of commanding presence and magnetic personality, but lacks suavity, and smoothness. He appeared in New York with the Chicago Company as *Renato*, and in Chicago, Nov. 17, 1920, in “*Jacquerie*” when his “glorious baritone voice with its rolling sonorous tones” brought favorable comment.

Edouard Cotreuil, a French baritone, appeared as *Rigoletto* in Dec., 1919, and was said to have a low, deep voice and commanding presence. He has proved a useful member of the company.

Dorothy Frances, who appeared in Chicago in November, 1920, as *Musetta*, delighted the audience with the beauty and brilliancy of her singing. The following month she appeared as *Jocasta* in "Edipo Re" and showed herself to be an exquisite artist. She made her début in opera in 1918 with the Society of American Singers in New York, having been a pupil of Charles A. White in Boston, and later of Richard Hageman in New York. In 1919-1920 she sang in New Orleans where she acquired routine and experience, appearing thirty-three times as *Carmen*, *Musetta*, *Santuzza*, etc.

Olga Carrara made her Chicago début in Nov., 1920, in a secondary part in "Jacquerie" but the following months she sang *Aïda* and showed herself to be a singer who gave promise of great achievements, possessed of a young and fresh voice and with a good sense of acting.

Cora Chase, another of the American girls who have met with success in Europe, made her



Chicago début in Feb., 1921, as *Gilda* in "Rigolotto." She sang as one well-trained, and made the most of a voice not in itself exceptional.

Of tenors, John Hislop made a good impression as *Rudolfo* in "La Bohême," having a fine lyric voice. He is a native of Scotland and his singing career has been chiefly in Scandinavia. He made his début as *Faust* in Stockholm, and then went to Italy to continue his studies. He sang many times at the San Carlo Opera House, then appeared in London, and then came to Chicago.

The biggest sensation of the season was the début in "Otello" of an American tenor, John Marshall. The occasion was also the farewell, for the season, of Tito Ruffo. Marshall is a man of towering stature with a voice of great power. In the duet with Ruffo the theatre rang with the vibrations of the two titanic voices. Marshall received fifteen or more curtain calls. His *Otello*, we are told "might be described as one after *Iago's* own heart. Bluff and bold, with a measure of intensity. . . . The use of his huge voice is not all it might be, but he has possibilities of a great *Samson* as well as a heroic *Otello*. His voice is as big as Tamagno's and of



---

much better quality." His was the greatest individual triumph witnessed in Chicago since the advent of Galli-Curci. He is an American and was singing in Italy when he was engaged for Chicago.

The most noteworthy addition to the Chicago company in 1921, among sopranos, was Maria Ivogün, a young Hungarian, who had studied in Vienna, and had made her début at Munich in 1914, when only nineteen years of age. Such was her success in Germany that Miss Garden, who was then manager of the Chicago Opera Association, secured her services. She had appeared only once in Chicago before she sang with the Chicago Company in New York, appearing as *Rosina* in "Il Barbière" and "she left nothing to be desired."

Her voice is of small calibre, but of exquisite texture throughout. Her coloratura is flawless, her scales, diatonic and chromatic, clear, her staccati clean, and her high tones round and firm. Her trill when sung softly was good, but when she attempted a crescendo it had a tendency to drop to a semitone interval and become a reiterated note."

She is young, pretty, lively and arch, captivating in her gesture and facial expression,

adept in the resources of comic action. She has much charm.

Graziella Pareto, a young Spanish coloratura soprano, joined the Chicago Company on Jan. 24, 1922, and made her American début with it in New York at the Manhattan Opera House, as *Violetta* in "La Traviata." She is tall, slender, stately and proved herself a singer of unusual capabilities. Her voice is a well-trained coloratura, remarkably pure in tone and accurate in pitch, with an easy, flowing delivery of the vocal fireworks.

Madame Pareto received her musical education in Italy, studying with Vidal in Milan and later with Sibella, whom she married. Her début was made in Barcelona, and since then she has sung in Spain, Italy, Scandinavia, London, Mexico City and elsewhere.

The Chicago Opera Company has been through sundry vicissitudes since Andreas Dippel resigned in 1913. Under Cleofonte Campanini it flourished artistically until his lamented illness and death. During his illness Marinuzzi became artistic director, but he resigned, and Mary Garden was appointed,—the first woman to hold that office.

This year, 1922, Miss Garden has resigned,

and a new organization is formed. Originally, under Dippel, it was the Chicago-Philadelphia Opera Company. Then it became the Chicago Opera Association. It is now re-organized as the Chicago Civic Opera Association, but, to the public it is as welcome under one name as another if it will provide opera of high artistic standard.

**THE END**



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